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A

DISSERTATION

ON

MIRACLES:

CONTAINING

An Examination of the Principles advanced
By DAVID HUME, Esq;
IN AN ESSAY ON MIRACLES:

WITH

A CORRESPONDENCE on the Subject by MR HUME,
DR CAMPBELL, and DR BLAIR,
now first published.

To which are added

SERMONS AND TRACTS.

BY GEORGE CAMPBELL, D.D.
PRINCIPAL OF THE MARISCHAL COLLEGE, AND
ONE OF THE MINISTERS, OF ABERDEEN.

The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. JOHN X. 25.

The THIRD EDITION, with Additions and Corrections.

VOLUME SECOND.

EDINBURGH:
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THE SUCCESS OF THE FIRST PUBLISHERS OF THE GOSPEL A PROOF OF ITS TRUTH.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

The SOCIETY in SCOTLAND for Propagating CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

At their Annual Meeting,

EDINBURGH, Friday, June 6. 1777.

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Edinburgh, June 6. 1797.

At a General Meeting of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge,

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this Society be given to the Reverend Dr Campbell, for his excellent Sermon preached this day before them; and that he be desired to permit the same to be printed for the use of the Society.

JAMES FORREST, Clerk.

Edinburgh, June 6. 1777.

At a General Meeting of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Chriſtian Knowledge,

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this Society be given to the Reverend Dr Campbell, for his excellent Sermon preached this day before them; and that he be deſired to permit the ſame to be printed for the uſe of the Society.

JAMES FORREST, *Clerk.*

SERMON II.

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1 Cor. i. 25.

——The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.

IT would ſcarcely be poſſible to conceive a new religion attended with more diſadvantageous circumſtances than was the Chriſtian religion on its firſt appearance; and of which, conſequently, the ſucceſs in the world would, humanly ſpeaking, be more improbable. Nothing could be worſe adapted to the prejudices that prevailed among Jews and Gentiles than its tenets: Nothing could be leſs accommodated to the

univerſal depravity of manners than its precepts. Both the obſcurity and the fate of its founder ſeemed alike inſuperable obſtacles to the advancement of his cauſe. And as to the perſons whom, under the title of Apoſtles, he ſelected to be the inſtruments of promulging his doctrine, they were ſuch as, in the judgement of all reaſonable men, would have been ſufficient, though every other circumſtance had been favourable, to render the ſcheme abortive. Truly, therefore, may we ſay, that if this counſel or this work had been of men, it muſt have come to nought. Any one of the particulars above mentioned would have been enough to ſtifle it in the birth; how much more would all of them when combined together? But *there is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel, againſt the Lord* *. His *thoughts are not* our *thoughts, neither are* our *ways* his *ways*. Juſtly is this divine inſtitution repreſented in the prophetic language under the emblem of *a ſtone*, ſomething at firſt to appearance inconſiderable,

* Prov. xxi. 30.

conſiderable, *cut out without hands*, not by human ſkill or dexterity, *which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth* *. For *the fooliſhneſs of God*, as ye have it in the paſſage read to you as the foundation of this diſcourſe, *is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.*

The apoſtle, in theſe words, is far from inſinuating that there can be any thing in the ſupreme all-perfect mind analogous to what we underſtand by the terms *folly* and *weakneſs*. But, by an uſual figure, he conſiders the extraordinary conduct of Providence manifeſted in this new inſtitution, under the denomination which the adverſaries were pleaſed to give it; and affirms, that the meaſures which the Ruler of the world had adopted, and which to them were fooliſhneſs, would be found to have more wiſdom in them than the wiſeſt plans of human contrivance; and that the means employed by Heaven, however weak they might be reckoned, would be ſtrong

* Dan. ii. 34. 35.

enough to baffle all the moſt vigorous efforts of the ſons of earth. Nay more, however ſhallow the meaſures, and however impotent the inſtruments may be, not in appearance but in reality, when attended only by natural and ordinary means, they will prove perfectly efficacious when attended by ſuch as are ſupernatural and extraordinary. God, when he is pleaſed to interpoſe miraculouſly, can effect his purpoſe not only without the intervention of man, but by ſuch human agency as ſeems better calculated to defeat the end than to promote it. This, we learn from the context, was, in ſeveral important reſpects, the caſe with the firſt promulgation of the goſpel.

To throw light on this doctrine, and to point out the uſe we ought to make of it, ſhall, with the aid of Heaven, be the ultimate ſcope of this diſcourſe. The argument couched in my text, and illuſtrated in the concluding part of this chapter, and the beginning of the next, may be thus expreſſed:

expreſſed: "The human and natural means originally employed for the propagation of the goſpel, would, without the divine interpoſition, have proved both fooliſh and weak, and therefore utterly incapable of anſwering the purpoſe. The purpoſe was nevertheleſs by theſe means fully anſwered. Conſequently they muſt have been accompanied with the divine interpoſition, and our religion is of God, and not of man." I ſhall firſt therefore endeavour to evince the truth of the firſt propoſition, and ſhow the utter inability of the natural means employed in promulgating the goſpel, to effect the end. I ſhall next evince the truth of the ſecond, pointing out the rapid and unexampled ſucceſs of the means that were employed;—and ſhall conclude with obſerving the influence which the obvious conſequence of theſe deductions ought to have upon us, and the improvement we ought to make of this doctrine.

I BEGIN with the unfitneſs of the means, that is, the natural and ordinary means, admitted

admitted by infidels, as well as Chriſtians, to have been employed; for it is of ſuch means only I am here ſpeaking. Let it be obſerved, that under this I comprehend the genius of the doctrine taught; becauſe, whether ſupernatural in its origin or not, it may have in it a natural fitneſs for engaging attention and regard; or, on the contrary, a natural tendency to alienate the minds of men, and render them inattentive and averſe. In this view the ſpirit and character of the inſtitution itſelf ought to be regarded as natural means, either of promoting, or of retarding, its propagation. Let us then examine briefly the two principal circumſtances already ſuggeſted, the doctrine and the publiſhers. It is to the former that the term *fooliſhneſs* is more eſpecially applied, as *weakneſs* is to the latter.

The doctrine of the croſs, in particular, the great hinge of all, was, in every view, expoſed to univerſal diſlike and deriſion. Conſidered as an article of faith in this new

religion,

religion, as exhibiting the expiation of ſin, and conſequently as the foundation of the ſinner's hope of divine pardon and acceptance, to men principled as they were, it both ſhocked their underſtanding, and was humiliating to their pride. Conſidered as a practical leſſon, and a warning of the treatment which the diſciples might expect, when ſuch horrible things had befallen their maſter, to follow whom in ſuffering they were ſpecially called, nothing could tend more powerfully to alienate their will, being oppoſed by all their moſt rooted paſſions, love of life, averſion to pain, and horror of infamy. And even conſidered only as a memorable event in the hiſtory of him whom all the proſelytes to this inſtitution were bound to acknowledge as their lawgiver and king, it was exceedingly diſguſtful, being contradictory to all the notions to which from infancy they had been habituated, in regard to the protection of Providence, and the marks whereby Heaven diſtinguiſhes its favourites deſtined for honour and authority.

Paul,

Paul, accordingly, takes particular notice of the bad reception which this doctrine met with from both Jews and Gentiles, in conſequence of the inveterate prejudices entertained againſt it. *The preaching of the croſs*, ſays he, *is to them that periſh*, to them who reject and deſpiſe the goſpel, *fooliſhneſs; but to us who are ſaved*, who by faith give it a grateful reception, *it is the power of God* *. However much the Jews and the Greeks differed from each other, in their religious principles, as well as cuſtoms, they concurred in a moſt hearty deteſtation of this, which made ſo fundamental an article of the Chriſtian diſpenſation. They viewed it differently, according to their different national characters; but the effect, an indignant rejection, was the ſame in both. Our apoſtle, who perfectly underſtood the difference, has marked it with the greateſt accuracy. *The Jews require a ſign*, an evidence of the interpoſition of Omnipotence, which may overpower their minds, and command an unlimited

* 1 Cor. i. 18.

limited assent; *and the Greeks seek after wisdom*, the elaborate productions of oratory and ingenuity, which may at once convince their reason, and gratify their curiosity: *but we preach Christ crucified*; a doctrine so far from suiting the inclinations of either, that *to the Jews* it is *a stumbling-block*, *and to the Greeks foolishness*. Both agree to reprobate this doctrine, but differently according to their different tempers. To the Hebrew, it is an object of abhorrence; to the Grecian, of contempt. He adds, *but to them who are called*, those who are divinely instructed, *both Jews and Greeks*, *Christ the power of God*, *and the wisdom of God* *.

Nor can we justly wonder that so strange a doctrine as this of the cross, so repugnant to flesh and blood, should, upon the trial, prove so unwelcome to carnal men. If we inquire but ever so little into the circumstances of the case, we shall find, that its reception could not have been any other

* 1 Cor. i. 22. 23. 24.

other than it was. The Jewiſh nation was at that time ſplit into ſects, which in many things entertained opinions oppoſite to one another. Nevertheleſs, all who expected the Meſſiah, of whatever ſect, concurred in the belief that he would be, what the world calls, an illuſtrious prince, a mighty conqueror, who would ſubdue kingdoms, and eſtabliſh for himſelf a new univerſal monarchy, or ſecular empire, (for of a ſpiritual kingdom they had no idea), wherein his own nations would be exalted above all the nations of the earth. From theſe ſentiments the Samaritans (however much they differed from the Jews in other reſpects) ſeem not to have diſſented; in theſe ſentiments all our Lord's diſciples had been brought up; and to theſe ſentiments, in ſpite of the manifeſt tendency of his inſtructions and example, they, by their own account, firmly adhered during his life, and even for ſome time after his reſurrection. Nor do they ſeem ever to have relinquiſhed theſe ſentiments, till the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, after the aſcenſion, on that memorable

rable day of Pentecoſt, on which the promulgation of the evangelical economy may properly be ſaid to have commenced.

But it is not enough to ſay that the Meſſiah held forth to this people in the goſpel, and that which the gloſſes and traditions of the Rabbis had taught them to expect, were perſonages widely different. They were, in moſt reſpects, the reverſe of one another. The people had not yet learnt, that God, though not in the tempeſt, the earthquake, nor the thunder, may yet be found in the ſmall and feeble voice. Their heads were occupied with ideas of grandeur and majeſty merely human. When they were thinking of the royal palace, their attention was called to the ſhop of the artificer. *Is not this the carpenter* *? ſay they, with a mixture of aſtoniſhment and contempt. Inſtead of riches and ſplendour, behold poverty and humility: For a potentate and warrior they had only a peaceful citizen. In lieu of one whoſe undertakings were,

* Mark, vi. 3.

were, in the ſight of all mankind, to be crowned with glory and ſucceſs, they were preſented with a man inceſſantly haunted by misfortune from his cradle to his grave; whoſe friends were few, and enemies innumerable; one who in their eyes had nothing deſirable, or, to adopt the expreſſion of the prophet, had *no form nor comelineſs* *; one who accordingly, from his firſt appearance in public, was by all the men of power and influence hated, derided, defamed, perſecuted, diſhonoured, and at laſt cruelly murdered. But the ſtone which the builders rejected ſoon became the head of the corner.

Proſperity and adverſity have in all ages, and in all nations, had ſome influence on the judgements of men, in regard to divine favour and averſion; but on no nation had theſe external things a greater influence than on the Jewiſh; and under no diſpenſation or form of religion, true or falſe, more glaringly, than under the Moſaic. There

* Iſa. liii. 2.

There was ſomething in that inſtitution, it muſt be acknowledged, which naturally led the attention to theſe outward diſtinctions between man and man. The promiſes and threatenings of the law, interpreted according to the letter, are of things merely temporal. That under theſe are couched the eternal things of the goſpel, is not to be denied; things which were alſo typified by the eſtabliſhed ceremonies and carnal ordinances. But it muſt be obſerved, that the literal is the moſt obvious ſenſe; the ſpiritual was perceived by thoſe only whoſe faith or ſpiritual diſcernment put them in a capacity of ſeeing through the veil of ſymbolical language and ritual obſervances. For it ever did, and ever will hold, that *the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him* *. But in regard to the generality of the people, (I may almoſt ſay the whole, the exceptions are ſo few), that outward happineſs or miſery were the ſtandard by which they determined whether a perſon were the object of the love or of the hatred of Heaven, is

* Pſal. xxv. 14.

a fact that might be evinced, if neceſſary, from numberleſs paſſages both of the Old Teſtament and of the New. And if this holds in regard to what may be called the general tenor of a man's life, it holds more eſpecially of his death. To be adjudged to the death of a malefactor by the ſupreme tribunal of the choſen people, they conſidered as an infallible mark of reprobation. How much more, when the very ſort of death, ſuſpenſion upon a tree, had a ſpecial malediction pronounced on it, which, as an indelible ſtigma, had been enrolled in the body of their law? *He that is hanged is accurſed of God* *. The Jews, accordingly, to this day, diſtinguiſh our Saviour by the name of THE HANGED MAN, as the moſt diſgraceful they can employ. We cannot then wonder, that to thoſe whoſe minds were blinded through ſenſual affection and obdurate prejudices, and in reſpect of whom, to adopt the apoſtle's ſimilitude †, the veil which covered the face of Moſes, too ſplendid for their weak organs, remained unremoved,

* Deut. xxi. 23. † 2 Cor. iii. 14.

removed, (we cannot, I ſay, wonder, that to them) the Meſſiah's croſs ſhould prove a ſtumbling-block. It in reality did ſo. The undoubted fact confirms the reaſoning. And the reaſoning is, from their avowed principles, ſo unqueſtionable, as to be equivalent to the cleareſt teſtimony of the fact.

Nor were the prepoſſeſſions of Pagans leſs impregnable, though built on different grounds. Of all nations the Jewiſh was the moſt contemned and hated by both Greeks and Romans. That their contempt and hatred were unreaſonable, I readily allow. But it is only with the fact I am here concerned, and that is incontrovertible. It were eaſy, however, to account for it from ſeveral peculiarities in the Jewiſh conſtitution, which made them be reckoned by others ſuperſtitious, unſociable, intolerant, ſelf-opinioned, and untractable. Their refuſal of all intercommunity with thoſe of other nations in matters of religion, a thing unexampled amongſt idolaters, their diſtinction of meats into clean

and unclean, and their laws in regard to ablutions, which very much interrupted even their civil intercourſe with Gentiles, conſpired in alienating the minds of ſtrangers. Though not deficient in courage and natural ſagacity, their being but little acquainted with the arts of war and government, made them appear inconſiderable in the eyes of the Romans; their ignorance of philoſophy and the fine arts rendered them deſpicable to the Grecians. It would not have been eaſy to make the people of either nation expect great benefits of any kind from a Jew. But to talk to them of ſuch a one as their Meſſiah or Saviour, that is, as the terms were explained by the preachers, the purchaſer of the remiſſion of ſins, of divine favour, of eternal life and happineſs, nay, as the perſon conſtituted by the Deity judge of all the earth, could, to men ſo ill affected to that people, hardly appear otherwiſe than as abſolutely ridiculous. How much then was the ridicule enhanced, when they were further informed, that this Meſſiah, this man of circumciſion,

ciſion, of the race of Jacob, had, like a common felon, and in company with common felons, ſuffered under a Roman procurator the infamous death of crucifixion?

It is not eaſy for us, at this diſtance, to enter perfectly into the ſentiments and feelings of men, whoſe manners, opinions, education, and cuſtoms, were ſo totally different from ours. It is more difficult on this ſubject, on which our minds have been ſo long pre-occupied, than on any other. The death of Chriſt, whom we venerate as our ſovereign, our high prieſt, and teacher in divine things, has, to us Chriſtians, ennobled the croſs, the inſtrument of an event of ſuch ineffable moment to the human race. We can no longer behold it with the ſame eyes. It is for this reaſon, that, in Chriſtian countries, the uſe of it in puniſhing is univerſally aboliſhed. We are inclined to conſider it as too honourable a deſtiny, for any after Jeſus Chriſt, of the poſterity of Adam, to undergo. But in order to judge

of the appearance and effect of a new doctrine, publiſhed in a remote period, we muſt, as much as poſſible, enter into the opinions and prepoſſeſſions that prevailed at the time. Conſidered in this view, it is but juſt to obſerve, that crucifixion was then, in the Roman empire, incomparably more diſgraceful than any kind of death known in theſe days in any part of Chriſtendom. No citizen of Rome, how atrocious ſoever were his guilt, how mean ſoever were his ſtation, though the loweſt mechanic, or the pooreſt peaſant, could be ſubjected to it. If a man was not a ſlave, as well as a criminal, it was not in the power of any magiſtrate to diſhonour him ſo far as to conſign him to ſo ignominious a puniſhment. And though the privilege of Romans did not extend to every free ſubject of the empire; ſo far did the Roman ſentiments prevail in regard to this mode of puniſhing, that it was held univerſally as in the laſt degree opprobrious. Conceive then the emotions which would naturally ariſe in the minds of ſuch people, when

when a man (a miſerable culprit in their account) who had been compelled publicly to ſubmit to ſo vile an execution, ſo degrading, ſo ſhocking to humanity, was repreſented to them as the Son of the Moſt High God, and the Redeemer of the world. If to men ſo prepoſſeſſed as were the Jews, this doctrine could not fail to appear impious and execrable, (and for a time it did ſo even to the apoſtles); to men ſo prepoſſeſſed as were the Gentiles it could not fail to appear nonſenſical and abſurd.

Nay, it is manifeſt from the writings of the early apologiſts for Chriſtianity, in the ſecond and third centuries, that this doctrine continued long to be a principle matter of offence to the enemies of our religion, and was regarded by ſuch as an inſurmountable objection. They treated it as no better than madneſs, to place confidence in a man whom God had abandoned to the ſcourge of the executioner, and the indelible reproach of the croſs. Yet this doctrine was, from the beginning, ſo

far from being taught covertly by the apoſtles, as one would have thought that a ſmall ſhare of political wiſdom would have ſuggeſted; it was ſo far from being diſſembled, and palliated, that it appeared to be that particular of their religion, of which, in ſpite of the utter abomination it raiſed in others, in ſpite of all the obloquy it brought upon themſelves, they were chiefly oſtentatious. With our apoſtle *the croſs of Chriſt* is a phraſe in familiar uſe for denoting the whole of this new economy. The foes of the goſpel he calls *enemies of the croſs of Chriſt* *. To the Corinthians, he ſays, he determined to know nothing among them, ſave *Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified* †. The offence taken againſt Chriſtianity he ſtyles, *the offence of the croſs* ‡. And the grand object of his glorying was what to others appeared the greateſt ſcandal, *the croſs of Chriſt*. So much in general (for your time does not admit my entering into particulars) of the fooliſhneſs of the doctrine.

LET

* Philip. iii. 18. † 1 Cor. ii. 2 ‡ Gal. v. 11.

LET us next conſider the weakneſs of the inſtruments, the firſt miſſionaries of this new religion. What were they? We ſhould certainly think, that a truſt of this kind, requiring the moſt conſummate ſkill and addreſs to manage properly, could not, with the ſmalleſt hope of ſucceſs, be committed to any, but men, who to great natural ſhrewdneſs, and acquired knowledge, had all the advantages that reſult from being acquainted with the world, and converſant in public life. If to theſe, wealth, nobility, and authority, were added, ſo much the better. But were the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel men of this ſort? Nothing can be conceived more oppoſite. A few fiſhermen of Galilee, and ſome others of the loweſt claſs of the people, poor, ignorant, totally unacquainted with the world; without any viſible advantages natural or acquired; men who, before they received this extraordinary miſſion, had been obliged to drudge for bread within the narrow limits of a toilſome occupation,

cupation, and had probably never dared to open their mouth in places where men of condition (their betters, as we familiarly expreſs it) were preſent. Such were the agents employed in effecting the greateſt revolution ever produced upon the earth. Was it in a rude and unlettered age that this religion was firſt broached? or was it only to the illiterate that its promulgators were charged to communicate it? It was at the time when Rome was in the zenith of her power; it was at the time when all the Grecian arts and ſciences ſhone forth in their meridian glory. It was then that theſe plain, unexperienced men, were commiſſioned, not cautiouſly to impart this doctrine in a whiſper, to perſons of a particular ſtamp, but to proclaim it to all indiſcriminately, as from the houſe-tops, to *preach the goſpel to every creature* *. Theſe lowly miniſters of Jeſus did accordingly publiſh it to the Jews in the temple and in the ſynagogues, and to the Gentiles in the forums of their cities, and in other places of public

* Mark, xvi. 15.

public reſort. Their undaunted ſpirit and freedom, conſidering what they were, did indeed amaze their ſuperiors, and all who heard them. When the High Prieſt, and other members of the Sanhedrim, *ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John*, in the ſpirited and pertinent reply they made, and perceived *that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled* *.

How different is the policy of Heaven, pardon the expreſſion, from that of earth! How truly is the matter repreſented in my context! *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe; and God hath choſen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and baſe things of the world, and things which are deſpiſed, hath God choſen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence* †. The apoſtles were very ſenſible of their defects, in reſpect of natural talents, rank, and education; they knew well,

* Acts, iv. 13. † 1 Cor. i. 27. 28. 29.

well, that by men of faſhion, men of the world, they were counted *as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things* *. But as their zeal was kindled ſolely in behalf of the cauſe of their maſter, they never affected to conceal or extenuate theſe defects. They neither diſdainfully undervalued thoſe acquired advantages which they had not, but which were poſſeſſed by many of their antagoniſts, nor vainly arrogated to themſelves any merit from the ſucceſs that attended their preaching. Their humble language was, *We have this treaſure*, the doctrine of the goſpel, the ineſtimable riches of Chriſt, *in earthen veſſels*; not veſſels of gold or ſilver, as men of eminence among the great and learned might be called, but veſſels of the very coarſeſt materials, thoſe denominated the dregs of the people, *that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us* †.

We are apt to attend but careleſsly to the report of facts to which our ears have been long

* 1 Cor. iv. 13. † 2 Cor. iv. 7.

long familiarized. Such is that of the low condition of thoſe who were the firſt heralds of the goſpel of peace. Beſides, to us the very title APOSTLES conveys certain ideas of reſpect and dignity, which, as it were, hide from us the meanneſs and obſcurity of their outward ſtate. In order, therefore, to rouſe our attention to this circumſtance, of the utmoſt importance to the right underſtanding of my argument, let us conſider what would be, I ſay not probably, but certainly, the effect of ſuch an attempt in our own age and nation, made by ſuch ill-provided, and, as we ſhould ſay, deſpicable inſtruments, unaided from above, in oppoſition to all the eſtabliſhed powers, religion, laws, and learning of the country. Yet we have no reaſon to believe that our fiſhermen are, in any reſpect, inferior to the fiſhers of thoſe days on the lake of Genneſaret. It would not perhaps be difficult to prove, that in point of education, in this part of the iſland at leaſt, they are even ſuperior. But to render the parallel complete, and to make it tally perfectly

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with the infidel hypotheſis about the promulgation of the goſpel, we muſt conceive ſomething ſtill more marvellous; namely, that a few ſuch men in this country, ſo wretchedly accoutred, ſo unfurniſhed with human means, friendleſs and pennyleſs, unacquainted with every language but their mother-tongue, of which they can ſpeak only a provincial and barbarous dialect, form the vaſt project of traverſing Holland, France, Germany, and the other countries on the continent, in order to make converts abroad, to impoſe on all mankind, and to publiſh throughout the world a ſcheme of doctrine they had previouſly concerted among themſelves. With the leaſt reflection we ſee the abſolute impracticability of ſuch a plan, when brought home to ourſelves. Indeed it is ſo glaringly impracticable, that it is not eaſy for us to conceive that ſuch an extravagance could ever enter into the heads of men in their ſenſes. Yet not one jot better equipped were the apoſtles, if we abſtract from ſupernatural aid, than ſuch projectors as I have now ſuppoſed.

poſed. In point of language, a moſt eſſential circumſtance, they could be no way ſuperior*.

Now the nature of things, my brethren, was the ſame then, that it is at preſent, and means which we perceive now to be perfectly inadequate, muſt have been always ſo. I do not talk of the improbability that ſuch ſort of men ſhould, at the riſk of peace, liberty, life, and every thing valuable, and without any imaginable motive, have conceived a project ſo fantaſtic, becauſe ſo totally beyond their ſphere, as that of ſubverting all the religious eſtabliſhments on the face of the earth, of extirpating at once opinions, ceremonies, laws which had ſubſiſted

* The ſpeech of the common people has always moſt of the peculiarities of the province. We have no reaſon to think that the dialect of any of the twelve was preferable to that of Peter. Yet he was detected at Jeruſalem by a ſervant-maid, from his uncouth idiom and accent, to be a Galilean; at a time when, we may believe, he would gladly have concealed his country, by diſguiſing his tongue, if it had been in his power. Mat. xxvi. 73.

ſiſted for many centuries, and even whole orders in ſociety, by ſubſtituting, in lieu of all theſe, a new theory of theirs, founded in a falſe ſtory of their own deviſing. Nor do I talk of the abſurdity of imagining, as ſome have done, that men who were neither fools nor mad (and if they had been either, their ſucceſs would not have been leſs unaccountable) ſhould, in a matter entirely ſubjected to the teſtimony of their ſenſes, have impoſed upon themſelves, and thought they were promoting truth, if it was not ſo. But I talk at preſent of the impoſſibility of ſuch agents ſucceeding by natural means, in ſuch a deſign, however formed. To account for the ſucceſs, therefore, we muſt neceſſarily admit the divine original of the whole, and have recourſe to the concurrence of him who *calleth the things that are not as though they were* *, and who alone can *deſtroy the wiſdom of the wiſe, and bring to nothing the underſtanding of the prudent.* With ſuch an almighty aſſiſtant, and nothing leſs will account for it, they might

* Rom. iv. 17.

might well be ſuperior to fear and apprehenſion, and might boldly challenge all human oppoſition, and ſay, *Where is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world? Hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world**.

But it will perhaps be urged, that the Apoſtle Paul ought to be conſidered as an exception from the general remark I have been explaining. Was not he a man of letters, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a famous Jewiſh doctor, and inſtructed in all the ſcriptural and traditionary learning of the Jews? Nay, does it not appear, that he was not altogether unacquainted with the writings of the Grecian poets? It is indeed true; and as we judge of every thing by compariſon, ſo when he is compared with his brethren in the apoſtolate, he may be denominated *learned*. But it ought to be obſerved, that as his learning conſiſted chiefly, I might almoſt ſay ſolely, in the ſcrip-

 ture,

* 1 Cor. i. 19. 20.

tures, and the rabbinical doctrine of the Phariſees, it is notorious in how little eſteem that kind of erudition was among the Gentiles, of whom he was eminently the apoſtle. Of whatever account, therefore, this knowledge might have been, had his miſſion been only or chiefly to the Jews; I muſt think, it was of very little, if any at all, to the Greeks and Romans. To them all Jewiſh literature appeared no better than unintelligible, and therefore inſignificant, jargon; or, as Gallio, the proconſul of Achaia, contemptuouſly ſtyled it, *queſtions of words and names, and of their law* *. Whatever uſe Paul might have made of his learning, in diſputing with the Jewiſh doctors, it could be of no ſervice in his diſputes with the philoſophers of Greece, and the *literati* of Rome. It is remarkable, therefore, that the only man among the firſt preachers of the goſpel, who was in any degree qualified to cope with the learned men of Judea, was not ſent to them, but to nations amongſt whom his Hebraiſtic

* Acts xviii. 15.

Hebraiſtic knowledge could give him no advantage. Whereas Peter, who is by way of eminence ſtyled the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, as the other is of the Gentiles *; (Peter, I ſay), though of their own country, was but one of the untaught rabble, who, on account of the meanneſs of their birth and ſtation, as well as their ignorance, were by the haughty ſcribes and rulers accounted the refuſe of the earth. *This people*, ſay they, *who know not the law, are curſed* †. Nor could Paul, in reſpect of rank, claim great ſuperiority over the reſt. He was only a handicraftſman, having been bred a tent-maker; a buſineſs which he occaſionally exerciſed, for the ſupport of himſelf and his attendants, during his apoſtleſhip.

Ay but had not this man all the advantage reſulting from the Grecian arts of logic and rhetoric? Did he not ſpeak their language with elegance and purity? I know

* Gal. ii. 7. 8. † John, vii. 49.

the apoſtle has had ſome ſtrenuous and well-meaning advocates, eſpecially among the moderns, not infidels, but Chriſtians, who, with more zeal than judgment, have maintained the affirmative. I am far from denying, that this eminent ſervant of our Lord poſſeſſed conſiderable talents, in reſpect of natural eloquence, depth of thought, ſtrength of reaſoning, and nervouſneſs of expreſſion. But that his Greek diction was pure and claſſical, or that in compoſing he followed the rules laid down by rhetoricians, we have the greateſt reaſon to deny. His works that are extant, do, to every able and candid judge of theſe matters, ſhow the contrary. The contrary was admitted by the beſt critics and orators among the Greek fathers, who muſt be allowed more capable of judging of propriety, fluency, and harmony, in their native tongue, than any modern can be in a dead and foreign language*. Further, the contrary is frankly owned by the apoſtle himſelf. Nay, he inſiſts, that according to the divine

* Such were Origen and Chryſoſtom.

divine counſel it muſt be ſo, this being of a piece with all the other natural means God had employed in the work. Thus he was *ſent to preach the goſpel*, as he tells us in the context, *not with wiſdom of words*. Why? *Leſt the croſs of Chriſt ſhould be made of none effect* *. Shall we then maintain his oratorical talents in ſpite of himſelf, and in ſpite of the irrefragable reaſon he adduces from the analogy of the divine procedure, in this whole diſpenſation? It would be paying him but a bad compliment, to extol his elocution at the expence of his veracity; for we are under a neceſſity of denying one or other. It appears, that his enemies made a handle of the rudeneſs and inelegance of his ſtyle, to injure his reputation, eſpecially at Corinth, where oratory was much in vogue. But though he vindicates himſelf from their other cenſures, he invariably admits the truth of this. *Though rude in ſpeech*, ſays he, *yet not in knowledge* †. And, *I came not with excel-*

* 1 Cor. x. 17. † 2 Cor. xi. 6.

*lency of ſpeech, or of wiſdom**. And, *the things of God we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth*†. Again, *My ſpeech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wiſdom.* He aſſigns the reaſon, the ſame in import with that given formerly, *that your faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God*‡. Speaking of their ſentiments concerning him, *His letters, ſay they, are weighty and powerful but his bodily preſence is weak, and his ſpeech contemptible*§. The power aſcribed to his letters undoubtedly refers to the ſenſe conveyed in them, and the ardour of ſpirit by which they are animated. That they did not conceive any part of their merit to be the purity or harmony of the ſtyle, is manifeſt from the latter part of the character, eſpecially when compared with what is repeatedly acknowledged in other places. Paul therefore had neither the graces of perſon, nor the ornaments

* 1 Cor. ii. 1. † 2 Cor. xi. 13.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 4. 5. § 2 Cor. x. 10.

ments of elocution, to recommend or enforce his doctrine. His language to Greek ears muſt have appeared idiomatical, not to ſay barbarous. And as his ſort of learning was but ill adapted to the people of Greece, Italy, or Aſia Minor, amongſt whom his miſſion chiefly lay, he did not poſſeſs that ſuperiority over the other apoſtles which is commonly imagined. Juſtly therefore might we apply to a Chriſtian who ſhould zealouſly aſſert the claſſic purity of our apoſtle's ſtyle, the rebuke which our Lord once gave to Peter, on an occaſion not unſimilar: *Thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men* *. The weakneſs, the infirmity, or, if you will, the inſufficiency of theſe meſſengers of the new covenant, was their glory, and their boaſt. Their motive was, *that the power of Chriſt might reſt upon* them †, and be manifeſted by them. To men of the world, indeed, the doctrine appeared not more fooliſh, than the miniſtry was weak.

* Matth. xvi. 23. † 2 Cor. xii. 9.

I have now, as I purpoſed in the firſt place, ſhown the inability of the natural means employed in promulgating the goſpel, to effect the end.

I PROCEED to conſider, ſecondly, the rapid and unexampled ſucceſs of the means that were employed. As to the rapidity of the ſucceſs, need I uſe many words to evince a point ſo evident, and ſo univerſally acknowledged? The canon of Scripture was not finiſhed, that generation had not paſſed, when Jeſus Chriſt had diſciples and churches in Judea, Samaria, Syria, Phenicia, Meſopotamia, Arabia, the countries of Aſia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Egypt, and as far as Ethiopia. This we learn, partly from the books of the New Teſtament, partly from the authentic remains of the apoſtolic fathers. Whilſt the faith of the goſpel was deeply rooted in all thoſe who profeſſed it; whilſt nothing but faith could induce any one to make the profeſſion; whilſt the profeſſors themſelves were haraſſed on every ſide with the moſt violent

violent perſecutions,—the Church of Chriſt, in ſpite of all oppoſition, and every ſpecies of diſcouragement, increaſed daily. In leſs than three centuries, for I reckon not from the birth of Chriſt, but as in a computation of this kind we ought to reckon, from the firſt publication of the goſpel at Jeruſalem on the day of Pentecoſt, (in leſs than three centuries), Chriſtianity having pierced into Gaul, Spain, Britain, and the African countries lying on the Mediterranean, became the predominant religion of the Roman Empire, which comprehended the greater and better part of the then known world. Nor was its extent limited by the empire. It did indeed, with wonderful celerity, overſpread the moſt populous countries in Europe, Aſia, and Africa. Since its eſtabliſhment by human laws, it has been put on ſo different a footing, and the methods taken for propagating it, have been, on ſome occaſions at leaſt, ſo completely altered, and ſo little warranted by the ſpirit and precepts of that religion, that the ſucceſs or want of

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ſucceſs of theſe methods can hardly effect our preſent argument.

Now, as it is admitted on all hands, that the ſucceſs of the firſt preachers of the goſpel was great and rapid, I maintain that it ſtill remains unexampled. I do not mean to ſtate a compariſon between converſion and conqueſt; between ſubduing the mind by perſuaſion, by what our apoſtle emphatically calls *the fooliſhneſs of preaching* *, and conquering the body by the ſword. In the one, both the reaſon and the will are gained by teaching; in the other, a feigned aſſent is ſometimes extorted by violence, and maintained by terror. It does not therefore in the leaſt concern my argument, what the ſucceſs was of the Mahometan, I ſay not doctrine, but arms. Their engine was war, not preaching. The weapons of their warfare were carnal, thoſe of the goſpel ſpiritual. Their aim was ſubmiſſion, not belief; the external profeſſion of the mouth, not the internal conviction of the underſtanding.

* 1 Cor. i. 21.

underſtanding. When the like methods came to be adopted by Chriſtians, (for too ſoon, alas! they were adopted, a ſure ſign that the religion of Jeſus was then groſsly corrupted and debaſed), the ſucceſs is doubtleſs to be accounted for in the ſame manner. Every candid perſon will admit, that the ſucceſs of Charlemaign over the Saxons, is no more an evidence of divine favour, than that of Mahomet over the Arabs.

But when all attempts of this kind are ſet aſide, one will perhaps be at a loſs what to bring into compariſon with the firſt promulgation of the goſpel. It is not, however, for want of numerous and repeated trials, even in the way of preaching; but when the effect is inconſiderable, or not correſponden to the expectation raiſed, the attempt itſelf comes gradually to be either quite forgotten, or little minded. Cruſades, wars, and maſſacres, have not been the only methods employed by Rome, not over-ſcrupulous about the means, when the advancement of the hierarchy, that is, the

the extenſion of her empire, is the end. She knows how to employ preachers, as well as inquiſitors, executioners, and ſoldiers. Nay, it is no more than doing her juſtice to acknowledge, that no church whatever, no ſtate, no ſociety, has done half ſo much in this way as ſhe has done. But with what effect? Has there appeared, in any part of the world, even where her miſſionaries have been moſt numerous, any fruits of their miſſions which bear a reſemblance to the fruits ſo quickly produced every where by the apoſtles of our Lord? Let the moſt ſanguine votaries of that church, who know any thing of the matter, ſay ſo, if they dare.

What then is the reaſon of the difference? Had the latter, the apoſtles of our Lord, any advantages (obſerve I ſpeak of human and natural advantages) which the former, the Popiſh miſſionaries, had not? Quite the reverſe. Every ſuch advantage has been on the ſide of the miſſionary, not one on the ſide of the apoſtle. They

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are not ignorant artificers of the loweſt claſs whom Rome ingages in ſuch a buſineſs. She has too much worldly wiſdom (notwithſtanding her arrogant and not very conſiſtent pretence to miracles) ever to employ ſuch meſſengers. Neither do her apoſtles go without the utmoſt preparation, that not only a learned education, according to the times, can give them, but ſuch particular inſtructions, ſtudy, and diſcipline, as will ſerve beſt to qualify them to accommodate themſelves to thoſe to whom they are ſent, to gain upon the people, and to bear with fortitude the difficulties and hardſhips they may be obliged to encounter. It is plain, therefore, that ſhe puts no confidence in her ſupernatural powers, and acts preciſely as though ſhe were conſcious ſhe had none. Indeed, ſince the eſtabliſhment at Rome of the congregation *de propaganda fide*, no attention, no pains, no expence, have been ſpared, that could ſerve for procuring all neceſſary information, in regard to the languages, arts, manners, and cuſtoms, of the different nations

tions and tribes to whom it is judged proper to ſend preachers; that they may be furniſhed, as much as poſſible, with every human and natural aſſiſtance for the work in which they are engaged. Yet what has been the ſucceſs hitherto? If one were to judge by the exaggerated accounts that have ſometimes been given by the miſſionaries themſelves, we ſhould think them wonderful indeed. But if we judge by the more impartial repreſentations given by others, or by, what is ſtill a better criterian, the remaining effects of their miſſions, we muſt pronounce them inconſiderable. In many places there is not now a veſtige of their labours. In other places, the traces that have been left are, I may ſay, equivocal, as well as few. Father Charlevoix, one of their own people, in his account of the North-American ſavages, obſerves, that the miſſions had been very unſucceſsful among them; and, what is more ſurpriſing, mentions one miſſionary, who had ingratiated himſelf ſo far with one of their tribes, that they would

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even have choſen him for their chief, who nevertheleſs had not been able to perſuade one ſingle perſon among them to embrace Chriſtianity *.

Well, but if the attempts have not proved ſo ſucceſsful in the Weſt, what wonders in the way of converſion have not been performed by a Saint Francis Xavier and his aſſociates in the Eaſt? Indeed there is no man in theſe latter ages who has been ſo much, and I believe ſo deſervedly, celebrated for his labours in this way, as this friar, whom Rome has dignified with the title of *the Apoſtle of the Indies.* He was certainly a moſt zealous promoter of a cauſe which he doubtleſs believed to be the cauſe of God. His pious intentions deſerve the commendation of thoſe who can pity his errors and abſurdities. Regard to the voice of conſcience, even though a miſinformed conſcience, is ſtill reſpectable. But is it not well known, that this famous miſſionary was not only a man of learning, the beſt

* Letter xxxi.

beſt that was then to be had, but, along with his companions, acted under the auſpices of the viceroy of Goa, the metropolis of the Portugueſe ſettlements in India? and where, for the greater ſecurity of the faith, they ſoon thought proper to eſtabliſh the inquiſition. Is it not evident, that in moſt places where the miſſionaries exerciſed their function, they were under the protection of the victorious fleets and armies of the King of Portugal? And even where theſe had not reached, the terror of their name had reached, and was of no little ſervice to theſe itinerant teachers. How unlike the caſe of the poor fiſhermen of Galilee! Miracles indeed, ſtupendous miracles, were pretended to by them, and thoſe of their party. For we have only the repreſentations of one ſide. It is ſurpriſing they were ſo often at a loſs for one miraculous power, the gift of tongues, ſo common in the primitive church, which would have been of greater ſervice to them than all the reſt together. This however they laudably ſupplied the beſt way they could, by the

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uſe of interpreters, as well as by ſtudy and application.

An eminent French preacher of the laſt century has affirmed, in a panegyrical ſermon on this apoſtle of the Pope, that he ſpread the light of the goſpel through more than three thouſand leagues of country, and ſubjected no leſs than fifty-two kingdoms to Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe are big words: But where, I pray, is that country? and where are thoſe kingdoms? This is rather too violent an hyperbole, even for an orator. The conqueſts made by the Portugueſe arms, in like manner as thoſe made ſince by other European powers, Proteſtant as well as Popiſh, are not ſurely to be called kingdoms converted by preaching the goſpel. Yet, abſtracting from theſe ſettlements, or, if ye will, uſurpations, it would be difficult to point out ſo much as one of thoſe fifty-two kingdoms ſubdued to Chriſt. Of the ſame kind is that other aſſertion in the ſame diſcourſe, that Xavier has more than repaired in the Eaſt all the hurt done to

Rome by Luther, and Calvin, and the other reformers (hereſiarchs, as he terms them) in the Weſt. Can there be a clearer demonſtration of the little regard that is due to the word of a panegyriſt and partyman? At this day, even in the Eaſt, thoſe reformers have more diſciples than Rome has. But, alas! it is not by what the apoſtle calls *the fooliſhneſs of preaching* that diſciples have been gained there to either ſide. The greater part have been tranſplanted from Europe, or are the deſcendents of thoſe who were firſt tranſplanted thither. The reſt are the effects more of conqueſt than of converſion.

But what ſhall be ſaid of the wonderful ſucceſs of Xavier in the iſlands of Japan? It was indeed as ſignal as it has proved tranſitory. Nothing could be more promiſing than the appearances were for ſome time. But there was a latent ſeed of corruption in the doctrine which thoſe miſſionaries unknowingly miſnamed the goſpel, that, ſpringing up, produced a plentiful crop

crop of its ordinary fruits, pride, ambition, violence, and faction. These provoked a perſecution, which quickly terminated in the total extinction of that infant church. Francis Solier, a Jeſuit, who writes the eccleſiaſtic hiſtory of Japan, expreſſes his aſtoniſhment, that God ſhould have permitted the blood of ſo many martyrs to be ſhed, without ſerving (as in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity) as a fruitful ſeed for producing new Chriſtians. But this can be no matter of wonder to the intelligent believer. The truth is, the cauſe was not more different at that time, (though under the ſame name), from what it had been, than were the uſual methods by which it was propagated. 'The Chriſtianity of the ſixteenth 'century,' ſays a late writer, 'had no right 'to hope for the ſame favour and protec- 'tion from God, as the Chriſtianity of the 'three firſt centuries. The latter was a 'benign, gentle, and patient religion, which 'recommended to ſubjects ſubmiſſion to 'their ſovereign, and did not endeavour to 'raiſe itſelf to the throne by rebellion. But

'the Chriſtianity preached to the infidels 'of the ſixteenth century was far different. 'It was a bloody, murderous religion, that 'had been inured to ſlaughter for five or 'ſix hundred years. It had contracted a 'very long habit of maintaining and ag-'grandizing itſelf by putting to the ſword 'all that reſiſted it. Fires, executions, the 'dreadful tribunal of the inquiſition, cru-'ſades, bulls exciting ſubjects to rebellion, 'ſeditious preachers, conſpiracies, aſſaſſina-'tions of princes, were the ordinary me-'thods employed againſt thoſe who refuſ-'ed ſubmiſſion to its orders*.' The ingenuous confeſſion of a Spaniard, more honeſt, it would appear, than wiſe, may be pleaded in juſtification of the ſanguinary precautions taken by the Emperor of Japan. Being aſked by the King of Toſſa, one of the Japaneſe iſles, and probably one of the fifty-two kingdoms mentioned by Bourdaloue, How the King of Spain got poſſeſſion of ſo great an extent of country in both

* General Dictionary, Article *Japan*, Note E.

both hemiſpheres? he anſwered frankly, That he uſed to ſend friars to preach the goſpel to foreign nations; and that, after having converted a conſiderable number of Heathens, he ſent his forces, who, joining with the new converts, conquered the country. The Chriſtians in that iſland (ſuch Chriſtians as they were) paid dear for this indiſcreet confeſſion. Poor then, if we may judge by the preſent effects, has been the ſucceſs of their miſſions among barbarians. Have they ſucceeded better in civilized nations? Their miſſions in China, it is true, have ſubſiſted for centuries. But will the candid and judicious, even of that communion, ſay, that the conſequences have been proportioned to what might have been expected from the aſſiduity, labour, and expence beſtowed on them? Moſt Roman Catholics themſelves conſider the greater part of the Chineſe proſelytes, as more than half Pagans ſtill. What will Proteſtants then reckon them?

I know not any thing done by Romaniſts in modern times, that appears more favourable, than what has been effected by ſome Jeſuits in the inland parts of South America, in the country called *Paraguay*. But of this, I am afraid, we have not as yet ſufficient knowledge to enable us to form a judgment that can be depended on. Some things, however, will deſerve our notice, that we may be ſatisfied that there is no ſimilarity in this caſe to the primitive publication of the goſpel. In the firſt place, thoſe Jeſuits are to be conſidered more as the founders of a polity than as the publiſhers of a religion. Religion indeed makes an eſſential part of their eſtabliſhment; ſtill it is but a part. Nothing could be more oppoſite to the conduct of the apoſtles, whoſe ſole object was to preach the doctrine and law of Chriſt, and, without interfering in the leaſt with the rights of civil governors, to bring men every where to the obedience of the faith. I obſerve, ſecondly, that inſtead of thoſe poor, illiterate, and obſcure men, who firſt

promulged

promulged to the world the everlaſting goſpel of the Son of God, we have here ſome ſelect members of an opulent, learned, and political ſociety, who were careful to be previouſly inſtructed in the language, manners, and religious obſervances of the people whom they were to teach; men who had moſt attentively ſtudied the policy of the ancient South-American ſtates, particularly of the Incas of Peru, and the arts they had ſucceſsfully employed in ſubduing the ferocity of their neighbours. I obſerve, thirdly, that it was more by inſinuation, and indirectly, than by open and profeſſed teaching, that the knowledge of Chriſtianity was introduced by them. Their direct and only object long appeared to be to teach thoſe ſavages agriculture, the moſt neceſſary manufactures, the art of building, and the other arts moſt conducive to civilization; and when in this way they had ſufficiently recommended themſelves to their confidence to take occaſion of inculcating, eſpecially on the children intruſted to their care, their religious prin-

ciples. The method of the apoſtles was much ſhorter; they did not find the leaſt neceſſity for ſuch artificial management.

Nor was it only in South-America that the Popiſh miſſionaries found it convenient to recur to theſe arts. Of how much conſequence it has been for promoting the ſucceſs of the Chineſe miſſion, that thoſe charged with it were able mathematicians, aſtronomers, geographers, phyſicians, and natural philoſophers; and how much their knowledge in the ſciences conduced to procure them the attention and reſpect of the natives, all the world knows. Where was the man of theſe modern apoſtles, who could ſay, as the Apoſtle Paul, the poor Hebrew artiſan, did to the Corinthians, *I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified?* Short, we may believe, would have been their abode in China, and in other places too, had they proceeded on this plan. But Paul needed not to depend on any human ſupplements or aſſiſtances whatever. Nothing

thing indeed could be more unlike, or rather greater contraſts, in all reſpects, than the firſt ambaſſadors and the laſt, thoſe of Jeſus Chriſt and thoſe of the Roman Pontiff. The laſt were poſſeſſed of thoſe accompliſhments which preſerved them from appearing deſpicable to any; the manifeſt ſuperiority of their knowledge in the elegant, as well as in many of the uſeful arts, made them be reſpected as almoſt a ſuperior order of beings, even by thoſe whom they could not perſuade to turn Chriſtian. The firſt, on the contrary, on account of their low rank, and ignorance of the arts of civilized life, were acknowledged to be, in many reſpects, but weak and contemptible inſtruments, even by thoſe who were converted by their miniſtry. This was evidently the caſe of him who of them all had the beſt pretenſions to knowledge and education. Not to mention the pageantry, even the rich ſacerdotal veſtments uſed by the Romiſh clergy in their worſhip are naturally fitted to make an impreſſion on the ſenſes, not only of barbarians, but of the weak

weak and ſuperſtitious even of poliſhed nations. How different muſt the ordinary and homely garments of the primitive preachers have appeared, worn conſtantly in their peregrinations! for they were not permitted to carry with them ſo much as a change of raiment *. Nor is this ſo trivial a circumſtance as to ſome perhaps, on a ſuperficial view, it will appear. Yet after all, with every human and natural advantage, what have been the fruits of the laſt labours compared with thoſe of the firſt? Have we not gotten ample reaſon, in this view alſo, to adopt the apoſtle's words, and, on contraſting Chriſt's humble delegates to the accompliſhed ambaſſadors of Rome, to ſay, *Where, now, is the wiſe? where is the ſcribe? where is the diſputer of this world! Hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of this world? For God hath choſen the fooliſh things of this world to confound the wiſe, the weak to confound the mighty, the baſe and the deſpiſed, yea and things that are not to bring to nought things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory in his preſence.*

For

* Matth. x. 10. Luke, ix. 3.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. If riches and learning, and the most refined policy, with the countenance and support of the secular powers, cannot, though combined, accomplish what, in opposition to all these, is effected with ease by poverty and illiterate simplicity, can we hesitate a moment in pronouncing, *This is the finger of God?*

I PROCEED, in the *last* place, to the improvement we ought to make of the doctrine now explained.

The *first* use it points to, is to strengthen our faith in the divine original of the holy religion we profess. This is the immediate conclusion of the premisses I have been illustrating and supporting. For if there was an utter inability in the natural means employed in propagating the gospel, without divine interposition, to effectuate the end; if the end nevertheless has by these means been effectuated in a way which no

human

human and natural advantages whatever could emulate, it muſt have been accompanied by divine interpoſition. Our religion is therefore of God, and not of man.

If we do not enjoy the advantage of being eye-witneſſes of preſent miracles, we have ſufficient evidence of thoſe performed in ancient times. We have not only the ampleſt and moſt unexceptionable teſtimony that they were performed, but we have ſo many and ſo remarkable conſequences of the performance, as it is utterly impoſſible for us otherwiſe to account for. Nor is this a modern view of the matter, ariſing, as might be ſuppoſed, from our ignorance, and the diſtance of that period. It is, on the contrary, a very ancient and ſtriking argument; and ſeems, from the firſt ceaſing of miraculous powers, to have affected every judicious and reflecting Chriſtian. Obſerve how Auguſtine, who lived about fourteen hundred years earlier than we, and who had good occaſion to know what the effects of the

apoſtolic

apoſtolic labours had been, argues with the infidels of his day from the ſame topic. 'If,' ſays he, 'ye will not believe the mi-'racles of the apoſtles, ye muſt at leaſt be-'lieve this miracle, that the world was, by 'ſuch inſtruments, without miracles, con-'verted.' This was, in his judgment, as it is, for the reaſons I have aſſigned, alſo in mine, more incredible, or, if ye will, more miraculous, than all the miracles which the goſpel requires us to believe. I repeat it, the reality of the ſupernatural facts recorded in holy writ, is the only plauſible, the only rational account that can be given of the effects produced, both on the firſt propagators of the faith themſelves, and on their hearers, Jews and Gentiles of all denominations. On every other hypotheſis, at every ſtep I advance, I meet with difficulties inſurmountable. To ſay, that theſe poor, ſimple, unbred, ignorant, timid men, purpoſely deviſed ſo unfeaſible an impoſture, and, wretchedly ill-provided as they were for ſo deſperate an enterpriſe, attempted at all riſks to perſuade the world,

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on their word, to receive it, is to me an abſurdity equal to any that can be found in the moſt legendary performance. I do not find it one jot more admiſſible, to affirm, that they had previouſly impoſed upon themſelves, and believed the falſehoods they advanced. No enthuſiaſm, no fanaticiſm, nothing leſs than inſanity, will account for ſuch deluſion, in a matter, not of opinion or ſpeculation, but (as it was to them) of ſenſe, of ſight, and feeling. And if to all their other diſadvantages, they were really inſane, or frantic, their ſucceſs will, if poſſible, be ſtill more wonderful. Such is the misfortune of the infidel ſolutions of this matter, that if you attempt to lighten any part of their ſcheme of thoſe weights that oppreſs it, you are ſure to lay a heavier load on ſome other part. And indeed, without the addition of madneſs or idiocy, the ſucceſs of ſuch men in ſuch an undertaking, ſuppoſing no interpoſal of Heaven, requires a greater ſhare of credulity to admit, than will be found requiſite in a reaſonable Chriſtian.

God

God has not, in reſpect of revealed, any more than in reſpect of natural religion, left himſelf without a witneſs. Sufficient evidence has been and will be always given. But different ſorts of evidence ſuit the different ſtages of the church. Viſible miracles were proper, they were even neceſſary, to atteſt a revelation pretending to be from God; an event really miraculous, but needing atteſtation, becauſe not ſenſibly ſo to thoſe who did not receive it immediately from Heaven. The fruits produced by the miracles then wrought, and which, on every other ſuppoſition but the truth of the miracles, are totally inexplicable; and the fulfilment of prophecies then given, which we may call intelligible, if not palpable, miracles, are the evidences that ſuit more the maturity of the church. The intrinſic evidence ariſing from the nature and genius of the diſpenſation itſelf, belongs alike to every period. Things are better balanced than we imagine. In the third and fourth centuries they had a nearer, and therefore doubtleſs a diſtincter view of the amazing

ſucceſs

ſucceſs which had attended the firſt preaching of the goſpel, notwithſtanding all the diſadvantages the preachers laboured under. But then they could not know ſo well from experience as we of later ages may, that it is not in the power of all human talents, natural and acquired, though combined together, to produce a parallel to that ſucceſs.

Let us not therefore fancy ourſelves excuſed in our unbelief, or diſobedience, becauſe we have not preciſely that ſort of evidence which others had. If we reſiſt ſufficient evidence, we are equally culpable with thoſe who were regardleſs of all the proofs, thoſe demonſtrations of the Spirit and of power, that were given by our Lord and his apoſtles. If we do not enjoy the advantages of thoſe of that age, we do not labour under their diſadvantages, which are more conſiderable than we perhaps are aware of. Such are the inveterate prejudices which their education had infuſed, in direct oppoſition to

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the doctrine, and the contempt, nay even the ridicule, which the paltry appearance (as in the language of the world we ſhould term it) of thoſe heavenly ambaſſadors, could not fail to create. Theſe things tend more to preclude attention and inquiry than men are apt to think. It is with the underſtanding, the eye of the mind, as with the bodily eyes. However good they are, and however ſtrong the light may be, they will never perceive that from which they are always turned.

I OBSERVE, *ſecondly*, That from any thing hitherto advanced we cannot juſtly infer the inutility of human learning in the cauſe of religion. It was for a ſpecial reaſon, and in ſingular circumſtances, that God was pleaſed to reject the uſe of it in the firſt promulgation of the goſpel. When this new diſpenſation was uſhered into the world, that its origin might be nowiſe equivocal, the aid of power, riches, learning, and oratory, which have great influence on the minds of men, was abſolutely

rejected; the very reverſe were choſen in the inſtruments God ſaw meet to employ, weakneſs, poverty, ignorance of the world, and of the arts and ſciences; that no conſiderate perſon might be at a loſs to what to aſcribe the effects produced; that the excellency of the power, to the conviction of every impartial ſpectator, might be of God, and not of man. There was a time, and a time of great danger too, it was in the reign of Jehoſhaphat, when God by his prophet commanded his people not to be diſmayed, or even to fight for the common ſafety; telling them, that the battle was God's; that they needed only to ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord with them *. In like manner, when God delivered Iſrael from the Midianites, by the hand of Gideon, of an army of thirty-two thouſand he permitted only three hundred to go to battle, and with ſo ſmall a force totally routed an innumerable hoſt of aliens †. But neither of

* 2 Chron. xx. 14. &c. † Judg. vii. 1. &c.

of theſe caſes was according to the uſual procedure of Providence. On all ordinary occaſions, it was the expreſs command of Heaven to all that were capable, to fight for their brethren, their ſons, and their daughters, their wives, and their houſes, remembering the Lord, who is great and terrible, and confiding in him *. It is only in extraordinary caſes (ſuch as the firſt promulgation of the goſpel) that the ordinary means are diſpenſed with. Theſe are in part the talents which God requires us to lay out in his ſervice.

There have been ſome who, without attending to the peculiarity of the caſe, have raſhly concluded from ſome expreſſions in the New Teſtament, that learning of every kind is rather an obſtruction than a help in propagating religion. But on this topic they preſerve no uniformity in their manner of arguing. Who will deny, that we ought to ſtudy the language of a people who ſpeak a different language, before we attempt to inſtruct them? Yet this branch

* Neh. iv. 14.

of learning was as much ſuperſeded by he gift of tongues, ſo common in the apoſtolic church, as the other branches were by the other ſupernatural gifts. And they were all ſet aſide for the ſame reaſon; not a natural unfitneſs, but, on the contrary, a natural *fitneſs*, for attracting reſpect, and producing perſuaſion; ſince, in conſequence of this fitneſs, the effect might erroneouſly be aſcribed to them; and the miraculous interpoſition of Heaven, to which alone it ought to be attributed, might be excluded or overlooked. In that ſingular caſe, the battle was God's peculiarly. The people were to ſtand ſtill, and ſee his ſalvation. Nothing was to be done but by particular direction. Now he chuſes to operate by the intervention of natural means, and commands us to quit us like men, aſſiduouſly to exert every talent that may with probability be profitably employed in this ſervice. The common reply, though true, is not ſatisfactory, That human learning has by miſapplication been greatly abuſed in matters

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of religion: for what talent is there that has not been abuſed and miſapplied? But if, on account of the abuſe, we were to renounce the uſe of a thing in itſelf good, all means whatever ought to be laid aſide. Even preaching, than which nothing has been more abuſed, muſt be given up for ever.

Let it not be imagined, that what was ſaid in regard to the uſe made of arts and ſciences by the Popiſh miſſionaries, was with a view to condemn or diſcredit ſuch expedients. It was only with an intention to ſhow, that there were many cauſes to which the ſucceſs of thoſe miſſionaries, comparatively little, might be attributed, without recurring to miracles; whereas there was nothing that could account for the aſtoniſhing ſucceſs of the apoſtles, in whom all thoſe advantages were wanting, but miracles alone. It was not to depreciate the wiſdom of man, but to ſhow that the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer. So far from condemning the Roman Catho-

lics in this, I approve, I applaud their zeal, their ſolicitude, their perſeverance. I only regret, they are ſo much miſtaken in the object; and that it is not for the ſimple truth as it is in Jeſus, that theſe qualities are exerciſed. I exceedingly regret, that it has fared with the goſpel in their hands, as it did with the Moſaic law in the hands of the ſcribes and Phariſees; that the precepts and gloſſes of men have corrupted and disfigured the word of God; and that the traditions of the Romiſh, as formerly of the Jewiſh rabbis, have, in many inſtances, rendered the divine commandment of none effect. If our induſtry were equal to theirs, we might well expect ſuperior ſucceſs from the ſuperiority of our cauſe. Let us not heſitate to take example in what is praiſeworthy from thoſe whom in other reſpects we diſapprove. Our Lord did not ſcruple to recommend to his diſciples, as a leſſon of prudence, the provident care even of an unfaithful ſteward: *For the children of this world*, ſays he, *are in their generation*

tion wiſer than the children of light *. The Romaniſts claim the high prerogative of working miracles; yet they purſue ſuch politic meaſures as ſhow that they lay no ſtreſs on that privilege. There are, on the other hand, enthuſiaſts, who, though they do not in words arrogate ſupernatural power, act as if they poſſeſſed it, treating with contempt the ordinary and natural means. Both are in extremes. And I ſhall only ſay of them, that if the latter ſpeak with more honeſty, the former act with more judgment.

Still however we are to be underſtood with this limitation, that the means employed muſt never be repugnant to the unalterable rule of truth and right, or to the ſpirit of that holy religion which we deſire to propagate. A good end will never ſanctify bad means. Men have too often, in the cauſe of God, as they pretended, had recourſe to deceit and violence. Theſe unhallowed inſtruments, ſo contradictory to

* Luke, xvi. 8.

the precepts. and ſo ſubverſive of the ſpirit of the goſpel, they have thought they conſecrated, by chriſtening them *pious frauds*, and *wholeſome ſeverities*. Let us ever remember, that it is impoſſible that the God of mercy and truth ſhould accept ſuch deteſtable offerings: *Thou ſhalt deſtroy them that ſpeak leaſing*, ſays David. *The Lord will abhor both the bloody and the deceitful man* *.

I OBSERVE, *thirdly*, and I conclude with it, that though in theſe days no miſſions can hope for ſucceſs comparable to that which attended the miniſtry of the apoſtles, this conſideration ought not to diſcourage ſuch attempts, or leſſen the ardour of Chriſtians for the advancement of the goſpel. It was fitting that the miniſtry of the Son of God, and of his ſelect ſervants, by whom the foundations of the church were laid, ſhould be ſignalized by the moſt glorious manifeſtations of divine preſence and agency. This was to ſerve to all future ages as

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* Pſal. v. 6.

a proof that the commiſſion came from God. But let it not be ſuſpected by any, that God will ever fail to countenance the cauſe of his Son, the cauſe of truth and virtue, and to honour thoſe with his approbation who exert themſelves to promote it. For one to ſay, 'Becauſe I cannot do 'good equal to that which with the aid of 'miracles the firſt preachers of the goſpel 'did, I will do none at all,' would be talking neither like a Chriſtian, nor like a reaſonable perſon. The great and the rich have it in their power to be more extenſively uſeful to their fellow creatures than the ignoble and the poor: Are the latter therefore exempted from being as uſeful as they can? God requires of every man according to what he has, and not according to what he has not *. Will it be a good apology for the ſervant who receives one talent, to ſay, 'Becauſe I received not, like 'ſome others, five talents, I thought it un-'neceſſary to employ myſelf in the im-'provement of ſo ſmall a ſtock?' The caſe of

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

of individuals, and that of whole generations, is in this reſpect ſimilar. To do what we can to diffuſe the light of the goſpel, and communicate the benefits thereof to others, is what every motive of piety to God and benevolence to men requires of us. And we may ſay, with the greateſt juſtice, that none deſerve better of mankind, than thoſe whoſe labour and wealth are employed in promoting the intereſts of their fellow creatures, the moſt valuable for time and for eternity. For this reaſon, the diſciples of Jeſus will entertain a due veneration for that truly Chriſtian and truly Patriotic Society, who have honoured me with their commands to addreſs you on this occaſion. Their aſſiduous attention has long been fixed, and by the bleſſing of Heaven has not been fixed in vain, on the moſt ſublime and important of all objects, the extenſion of the kingdom of Meſſiah, and the ſalvation of the ſouls of men. I ſpeak not thus to convince you of the juſt title they have to your eſteem. This is a very ſmall matter to thoſe who ſeek not the

praiſe

praiſe of men, but that which comes from God, the omniſcient and unerring Judge. But I ſpeak to awaken the ſame zeal in the breaſts of you, my hearers, and to excite every one of this aſſembly, to co-operate to the utmoſt of his power, in promoting the ſame noble ends.

And let us all add fervent prayers to ſtrenuous and virtuous endeavours. *Pray*, ſaid David*, *for the peace of Jeruſalem.* Our Jeruſalem is the church of Chriſt, the antitype of that metropolis, the true city of the great King. Of HER we may juſtly ſay, *They ſhall proſper that love* THEE. *Peace be within* THY *walls, and proſperity within* THY *palaces! For* our *brethren and companions ſakes* we *will ſay, Peace be within* THEE. *Becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God,* we *will ſeek* THY *good.*

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* Pſal. cxxii. 6. &c.

THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON CIVIL SOCIETY:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

The Assizes at ABERDEEN,

Sunday, May 23. 1779.

SERMON III.

PROV. xiv. 34.

Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation.

THERE is no ſubject on which libertines ſhow more inconſiſtency, than on what regards the advantages derived from religion to civil ſociety. When their deſign is to vindicate their open contempt of its principles, and violation of its precepts, they fail not to repreſent it as a burden both intolerable and unneceſſary, and which, without yielding any benefit that can be called a compenſation for ſo great

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THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON CIVIL SOCIETY:

A

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PREACHED AT

The Assizes at ABERDEEN,

Sunday, May 23. 1779.

SERMON III.

PROV. xiv. 34.

Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation.

THERE is no ſubject on which libertines ſhow more inconſiſtency, than on what regards the advantages derived from religion to civil ſociety. When their deſign is to vindicate their open contempt of its principles, and violation of its precepts, they fail not to repreſent it as a burden both intolerable and unneceſſary, and which, without yielding any benefit that can be called a compenſation for ſo great

a ſacrifice, requires a degree of ſelf-denial that nearly approaches to a renunciation of liberty. On the other hand, when they attempt to account for its origin, and the univerſality of its reception in ſome form or other throughout the world, they conſtantly recur to the arts of politicians, who have ſeen the abſolute neceſſity of this expedient for keeping the people in ſubjection, and adding authority to their laws. They do not ſeem to advert, that theſe pleas are incompatible with each other; and that, in regard at leaſt to the utility of religion, they confeſſedly oppoſe the common ſenſe of mankind; ſince they exhibit the leaders, and lawgivers, in every nation, as concurring, though not by concert, in the conviction, that without the reverence of ſome power ſuperior to human, man would be ungovernable. Yet the belief of the exiſtence and agency of ſuch a power is, on other occaſions, treated with ridicule by thoſe ſages, and repreſented as a principle not only uſeleſs, but extremely cumberſome. And if, upon reflection, any of them

them relax a little on this article, and admit that it may be of uſe, that the groſs of mankind believe the ſuperintendency of a ſupreme being over the affairs of the world, particularly over the actions of men, they ought doubtleſs to account thoſe perſons bad citizens as well as infidels, who by their practice, converſation, or writings, attempt to undermine ſuch uſeful principles, and, as far as in them lies, to looſe the bands which, by giving additional ſtrength to ſocial duties, bind men more cloſely to one another.

Though it were eaſy to demonſtrate, both from the nature of the thing, and from the moſt authentic hiſtory, that religion neither is, nor could have been, (as ſome have profanely repreſented it), a ſtate-device for keeping the people in awe; it muſt be owned, that the neceſſity thereof for preſerving the peace and order, and for promoting the happineſs of ſocial life, was very early obſerved, and has been univerſally acknowledged. But, as there may be

be ſome, who, though they admit the fact in general, may not clearly perceive the connection, and conſequently may not be ſufficiently fortified againſt the cavils of infidelity and ſcepticiſm, now ſo common, I purpoſe at this time to lay before you ſome of the principal arguments whereby religion is proved to be of the utmoſt importance to the ſecurity and well-being of civil ſociety.

This happy tendency of the religious character to advance national proſperity, is, in my judgement, the ſentiment intended to be conveyed by Solomon in my text: *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation.* For though, by the word *Righteouſneſs*, ſometimes no more is meant than the virtue of *juſtice*, it much oftener in Scripture-language denotes 'the conſcientious obſervance of our duty reſulting from the 'fear of God,' and, in this acceptation, is equivalent to the term *religion.* Now to the prevalence of this principle, the wiſe King of Iſrael aſcribes, in a great meaſure, the

the flouriſhing ſtate of a nation or polity. To illuſtrate his ſentiment is the ſcope of the preſent diſcourſe.

Ye aſk, 'How is religion conducive to 'the exaltation and felicity of the body-'politic or nation?' I anſwer, It conduces to this end in theſe four different ways: By the tendency and extent of its laws; by the nature and importance of its ſanctions; by the aſſiſtance which it gives to the civil powers, both in ſecuring fidelity, and in diſcovering truth; and by the poſitive enforcement of equity and good government on the rulers, and of obedience and ſubmiſſion on the people. Let it be obſerved, that though, in this diſcourſe, I ſpeak of religion in general, I am always to be underſtood as referring to the Chriſtian religion in particular. It is indeed true, that even thoſe religions, if we may call them ſo, many or moſt of whoſe fundamental principles are erroneous, may, in a political view, be conſidered as beneficial, and infinitely preferable to Atheiſm, or total

irreligion; yet it is certain, that in this, as well as in other more important reſpects, no form of ſuperſtition can bear to be compared with that religion which alone has God for its author, and the greateſt good of mankind, both temporal and eternal, for its object.

I proceed to make a few obſervations, and your time will admit but a few, on the four heads of diſcourſe now mentioned. They are ſo many topics of argument, by which the great truth contained in my text, That *righteouſneſs*, or true and practical religion, *exalteth a nation*, is at once both explained and evinced.

I. I begin with ſhowing, that religion conduces to the welfare of the community, by the tendency and extent of its laws.

Concerning the tendency of the laws of the Chriſtian inſtitution, it is impoſſible for an intelligent perſon to doubt, that it is to promote the happineſs of human ſociety. The

The whole of practical religion is ſummed up by the great author and finiſher of our faith in two fundamental precepts *. The *firſt* enjoins us *to love God with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and with all our mind.* The *ſecond*, which is like to the firſt, and founded on it, enjoins us *to love our neighbour as ourſelves.* The Apoſtle Paul accordingly has, with great propriety, comprehended all ſocial duties in the latter of theſe precepts. *Owe no man any thing*, ſays he †, *but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery; Thou ſhalt not kill; Thou ſhalt not ſteal; Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs; Thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* To the ſame purpoſe our bleſſed Lord ‡ has compriſed all the duties incum-

* Matth. xxii. 37. 38. 39. 40.

† Rom. xii. 8. 9. 10. ‡ Matth. vii. 12.

bent on every man to every other, under this excellent moral maxim, *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this*, he adds, *is the law and the prophets.* It would be miſſpending time to attempt to prove, that the ſtrict obſervance of theſe precepts would both prevent the greateſt evils which diſturb the peace of ſociety, and would conduce, in the higheſt degree, to promote mutual confidence, harmony, and good-will, among fellow-citizens. This is a truth ſo evident, that, as far as I can learn, it has never been denied or diſputed by any. It has only been regretted, that we have ſo few examples of the influence of precepts ſo ineffably important and divine. But this very regret implies a conviction, or rather is a confeſſion of their goodneſs, and of the happy effect which religion muſt have on ſociety, wherever it meets with a ſuitable reception.

I include under this head not only the tendency, but the extent of the laws of religion. In regard to their tendency, there is

is a manifeſt co-operation with the municipal laws of all well governed countries, whereby the perſons, the lives, the liberty, and the property, of the people, are ſecured from unjuſt invaſion or attack. But in point of extent, the difference lies here. It is the aim of religion to remove the cauſes of thoſe calamities by which ſociety is injured, whilſt human laws reach only their deſtructive conſequences. Theſe crop the weeds, but the other plucks them up by the roots. The only things which are, or can be, ſubject to man's juriſdiction, are what we call *overt acts*, that is, external and diſcoverable actions; the principles of the heart, out of which are the iſſues of life, are ſubject to God's juriſdiction, and to it only. There is a weakneſs or imperfection inherent in the former, and incurable, inaſmuch as it neceſſarily reſults from the imperfection of human knowledge and of human power. It is ſolely by the influence of religion, that this deficiency can, in any meaſure, be ſupplied. When the divine teſtimony is received with faith and

love, it applies medicine to the ſpiritual diſeaſes, and gives health and vigour to the ſoul. Human laws, for the protection of peace and good order in ſociety, may concur with the divine law * in ſaying, *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery;* but it is only the word of God † that teacheth us, *That whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* By the former, indeed, we are commanded to do no murder: From the latter ‡ we learn, that *whoſoever hateth his brother is*, in God's account, *a murderer.* It ſuits the language even of human lawgivers to ſay, "Thou ſhalt not ſteal:" But it belongs peculiarly to the divine authority ‖ to add, *Thou ſhalt not covet.* This character of *religion*, under the title of "the word of God," is admirably well delineated by the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews. *The word of God*, ſays he §, *is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two*

* Exod. xx. 14. † Matth. v. 28. ‡ 1 John, iii. 15.
‖ Exod. xx. 17. § Heb. iv. 12.

two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Thus it is evident, that religion, in reſpect both of the ſalutary tendency of its precepts, and of their extent, as reaching to the purifying of the heart, muſt, whereſoever it is believed, conduce greatly even to the temporal happineſs and flouriſhing ſtate of the community.

II. I proceed, in the ſecond place, to ſhow, that religion eminently promotes the ſame end by the nature and importance of its ſanctions, the rewards which it promiſes, and the puniſhments which it threatens.

It has been often pleaded, on this topic, and ſometimes with an air of triumph, that though the ſanctions of human laws are but temporal, and thoſe of religion moſtly eternal; yet as the former are viſi-

ble and more immediate, and the latter inviſible and more remote, the former have incomparably greater influence on the generality of men than the latter. But were we to admit this as a fact, it does not overturn my argument. In every ſtatute of man which does not contradict the commandment of God, religion leaves the human and legal ſanctions to operate with their full force upon its votaries. If its peculiar ſanctions are admitted to be of any weight at all, (and it can hardly be thought that they will not weigh with ſome), they are juſt ſo much weight ſuperadded to the other, and contributing to the ſame end, the public welfare.

But as to the comparative influence of the two kinds of ſanctions, thoſe of religion and thoſe of the legiſlature, it appears to beſt advantage when the laws of religion and the laws of the ſtate, unfortunately run counter to each other. This was actually the caſe of the primitive Chriſtians, when Chriſtianity was perſecuted,

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and the very profeſſion of it declared criminal. Were there not ſome, were there not even multitudes, who *then* ſhowed the infinite ſuperiority of its ſanctions over all that human art and malice could ſet in oppoſition to them? Were there not then thoſe whoſe conduct demonſtrated, that they had thoroughly imbibed that great leſſon given by their maſter, * *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell?* Were there not then thoſe who ſhowed, in the moſt convincing manner, that the lively hope of a glorious immortality can ſurmount the horror of inſtant death, accompanied with ignominy and torture? Religion and the ſtate were then at variance. And though the conflict was purely defenſive on the part of the former, and what, to judge after the manner of men, we ſhould pronounce very unequal, inaſmuch as ſhe never, even in ſelf-defence, employed the arm of fleſh, thoſe earthly

* Luke xii. 4. 5.

earthly weapons which were ſo cruelly uſed againſt her, her patience and perſeverance were at length crowned with victory, and, notwithſtanding her many diſadvantages, ſhe triumphed over all oppoſition. Now if religion was then, though a paſſive, yet ſo formidable an adverſary, when forced, againſt her natural bent, to take an adverſe part, have we not reaſon to believe, that when, in conformity to her native diſpoſition, ſhe is engaged in the ſame cauſe, ſhe will prove an active and a powerful ally?

But it is not barely by the addition of the ſanctions of heaven, hell, and eternity, to thoſe of the municipal laws, founded in the principles of natural juſtice, that religion co-operates with the civil powers, promoting the ſame end, the peace of ſociety; there are many caſes wherein the ſanctions of the latter have no influence at all, whilſt thoſe of the former operate with all their force. 'It is a very ſmall mat-'ter, ſaid an ancient Heathen *, 'to be 'good

* Exiguum eſt quiddam ad legem bonum eſſe. *Seneca.*

'good in the legal ſenſe.' The reaſon is, thoſe tranſgreſſions which come under the cogniſance of human tribunals, muſt be in a particular manner circumſtanced, ſo as to be comprehended in the preciſe definition which the legiſlature has adopted. Hence it happens, as every judicious perſon will admit, that a man may be notoriouſly a conſummate villain, a diſobedient ſon, an unnatural father, a cruel huſband, a tyrannical maſter, a litigious neighbour, and in every reſpect a bad citizen, whom nevertheleſs no human laws can reach. Nor is there a poſſibility of redreſſing this grievance in any polity, but by what would prove a ſtill greater grievance, by conferring on magiſtrates and judges ſuch a latitude of diſcretionary power as would render them quite arbitrary. The caſe is very different with the ſanctions of religion, which always regard the motive, the diſpoſition, and the intention of the agent, more than the outward circumſtances of the action.

Further,

Further, though the crime ſhould be ſuch as to fall exactly under the deſcription of the law, it may be ſo ſecretly committed as to elude the eye of even the moſt vigilant magiſtracy; and where, in that caſe, is the curb againſt the blackeſt guilt, if none is to be found in religion? Our judges, being men, are neceſſarily weak and imperfect. They require informations, the examination of witneſſes, and other ſorts of evidence. In religion, the ſame juſt, omniſcient, and all-perfect being, is both the witneſs and the judge. How admirably is the ſtrength of this motive illuſtrated in the ſtory of Joſeph? He ſeems to have been ſecure from all human detection. But he well knew, that there was a witneſs greater than man, from whoſe all-ſeeing eye it was impoſſible he ſhould be ſcreened. *How can I do this great wickedneſs*, ſaid he *, *and ſin againſt God?*

It is but too evident, that in this licentious age we have few ſuch examples. But what

* Gen. xxxix. 9.

what does the ſmallneſs of the number evince? Not the want of efficacy in the ſanctions of religion to prove a check on mens actions, but the want of religion amongſt us to ſupply by its ſanctions a check on ours. It does not refute the poſition of the Royal Preacher *, that *by the bleſſing of the upright the city is exalted*; it only ſhows, that there are few upright in the city to exalt and bleſs it. Religion operates ſolely by faith. It has no influence on any, farther than it is believed. We cannot then wonder, that, in thoſe walks of life wherein ſcepticiſm and infidelity abound, we ſhould find the utmoſt diſſoluteneſs of manners. We might juſtly wonder, were it otherwiſe. A corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit, no more than a good tree can produce evil fruit. What diabolical pains and aſſiduity have not ſometimes been employed, eſpecially among thoſe of ſuperior rank, to extirpate every religious principle from the minds of females, whoſe more delicate ſenſibility renders

* Prov. xi. 11.

renders them more ſuſceptible than men, of the influence of religion? And what has been the conſequence of this, which is indeed the worſt ſpecies of debauchery? In too many ſuch an open diſregard to the moſt ſacred engagements, ſuch ſhameleſs profligacy as, in that ſex, was without example in this country in former ages. But thoſe men have no title to complain of the effects, who, by their diſſolute example, and ſtill more by their impious converſation, have proved the principal cauſe of the evil.

Again, where is the check but from the ſanctions of religion, on thoſe deſpotic princes who have raiſed themſelves by their arms, or have been raiſed by a ſervile people, above all law and controul? To ſuch men religion, and religion only, can be of power enough to curb the violence of the paſſions. And where there is no religion, there is no reſtraint. Every conſiderate perſon will admit, that the concluſion form-

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ed by Abraham *, that there could be no ſecurity for his wife's perſon, or his own life, againſt the unbridled deſires of an arbitrary prince, who might do what he pleaſed, was a juſt and natural concluſion from the principle aſſumed by him, That there was *no fear of God in that place.*

For, let it be obſerved further, that religion is not entirely without influence, even on thoſe who are not intitled to be called religious. It deters from the commiſſion of crimes, by its threatenings, thoſe whom its charms have not allured to the practice of virtue. An excellent illuſtration of the influence of religion, in the caſe of abſolute monarchs, is given by a late writer of great genius and penetration. 'A prince who loves religion, and fears it, 'is a tame lion, which yields to the hand 'that ſtrokes him, and to the voice that 'ſoothes him. He who fears religion, 'and hates it, is an untamed lion, which 'bites the chain that reſtrains him from 'throwing

* Gen. xx. 11.

'throwing himſelf upon the paſſengers. 'He who has no religion, is that terrible 'animal, unſubdued, and at large, which 'is not ſenſible of his liberty, but when 'he tears in pieces and devours *.'

Permit me to add on this head, that though the principal ſanctions of religion are future and eternal, theſe are not its only ſanctions. There are ſome which are preſent and temporal. The approbation and the reproach of conſcience; a belief in the ſuperintendency of providence, in the courſe of which God is often pleaſed to defeat the ſecret machinations of the wicked, making the miſchief intended for another to return upon the head of the contriver; and not ſeldom to bring unexpectedly to light the hidden things of diſhoneſty, to the diſgrace of thoſe who were the perpetrators, are, though regarding the preſent life only, not to be conſidered as entirely without effect.

Thus

* De l'Eſprit de Loix, liv. xxiv. ch. 2.

Thus I have ſhown, in the ſecond place, that religion promotes the peace and proſperity of the nation, by the nature and importance of its ſanctions.

III. I maintain, thirdly, That it promotes the ſame end, by the aid which it gives to the civil powers, both in ſecuring fidelity, and in diſcovering truth.

Mens conviction of the weakneſs of all human ties, when oppoſed to ſome powerful inducement from intereſt, ambition, or ſenſuality; their conſciouſneſs how little, in caſe of ſuch a competition, faithfulneſs could be ſecured by any promiſe, or veracity by any proteſtation, has made them univerſally borrow help from religion, to furniſh them with an additional ſecurity in aid of human engagements and allegations. Hence the origin of oaths, not only of fidelity to a truſt, and of allegiance, but alſo in matters of evidence, in bearing teſtimony, both in civil cauſes and in criminal. Now an oath is in fact a ſolemn

appeal to God, who knows all things, who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the title of *the God of truth*, and who is the avenger of all deceit and wickedneſs. By connecting with the affirmation a declared ſenſe of the divine preſence and juſtice, a lie is loaded with the guilt of impiety; and that which would otherwiſe have been conſidered, though unjuſtly, as but a venial treſpaſs, a ſlight departure from the duty we owe to others, is viewed in the more atrocious light of an affront to the Majeſty of Heaven, whoſe omniſcience appears to be directly inſulted, and whoſe omnipotence appears to be defied.

I do indeed moſt readily admit, that as in every lie there is an infringement of the law of God, a conſcientious man will, from motives of piety as well as juſtice, be reſtrained from it. He knows, that all ſins whatever, even thoſe called ſins of the ſecond table, which are committed more directly againſt his neighbour, ſtrike ultimately againſt God the ſupreme legiſlator, of whoſe law they are the violations; and for

for this reaſon I ſhould not heſitate to pronounce of a truly good man, that his word is equivalent to his oath. But, alas! we have too much reaſon to think, that this integrity is not ſo common as might be wiſhed. How far it is, where found, to be attributed to a ſenſe of religion, is ſubmitted to the candid and judicious; but, in regard to the bulk of mankind, we may ſafely affirm, that though religion meets not with that reception which can impower it to influence the whole tenor of their conduct, it ſo far impreſſes their imagination as is ſufficient for reſtraining them from the perpetration of crimes, eſpecially ſuch crimes as are univerſally accounted the moſt flagitious. Now in this number *perjury* is always claſſed. If even then this weak impreſſion of a power ſuperior to human, this very imperfect degree of the fear of God, were, by the univerſal prevalence of that Atheiſm, and contempt of religion, which are viſibly making rapid progreſs amongſt us, and already infecting the lower claſſes

of men, (if it were, I ſay), totally baniſhed the land, it may be referred to the determination of thoſe whom worldly conſiderations only can affect, whether this event, which appears ſo deſirable to many, would conduce to the honour and purity of our families, the ſecurity of our properties, liberties, and lives. Amongſt an unprincipled people, in whom is no belief of Deity or Providence, heaven, hell, or eternity, can we be ſo vain as to imagine that there would be much regard to the ties of truth and juſtice?

On thoſe, whoſe birth, education, or circumſtances, have brought them into the upper walks of life, it has been often thought, that a ſenſe of *honour* would have conſiderable influence, and prove an effectual reſtraint at leaſt from ſome vices, though there were very little ſenſe of *virtue*, and none at all of *religion*. But, as far as I can recollect, it has been admitted by the ſages of all times and countries, that without a ſenſe of religion of ſome ſort

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or other, there could be no dependence upon the vulgar.

In reſpect of what is called *a ſenſe of honour*, I beg leave to remark, that as this principle does not regard the moral pravity of the action, nor yet its pernicious conſequences either to individuals or to ſociety, but ſolely the diſeſteem wherein it happens to be among thoſe called *the faſhionable world*; ſo there are ſome of the moſt enormous crimes, which, in their effects, prove ruinous to individuals, and ſubverſive of the peace of families, from which this principle of honour affords no protection whatever. It were eaſy to ſhow, did time permit at preſent, what horrid injuſtice, ingratitude, treachery, cruelty, falſeneſs, (for, in affairs of gallantry, what man of faſhion thinks there is any thing diſhonourable in the breach of vows?) nay what worthleſſneſs, in many reſpects, may be perfectly compatible with the unaccountable character, the offspring of pride and caprice, A MAN OF HONOUR. And

even in thoſe few caſes wherein ſomething like moral qualities, ſuch as veracity and courage, come within its precincts, as it always has reſpect to the opinions of others, the ſentiments in vogue; ſo, wherever abſolute ſecrecy can be ſecured, it is totally diſarmed. Indeed, in regard to all thoſe vices which may be perpetrated in ſuch a manner as to elude diſcovery, and give a defiance to the moſt inquiſitive curioſity, where can be the curb on perſons of any claſs, if all ſenſe of *virtue* and *religion* are wanting?

'True,' ſay ſome, 'if both are want-'ing; but will not the former prove ſuf-'ficient without the latter?' I ſhall only anſwer, That though I will not preſume to ſay what in every ſuppoſable ſituation would poſſibly influence a human character, I will venture to pronounce, that if ye make a ſeparation between thoſe two which God and conſcience have joined together, and divorce *religion* from *virtue*, ye will find

find ye have deprived the latter of her ſteadieſt friend, her beſt comforter, her firmeſt ſupport. And whatever may be the pretences or appearances of human virtue, when deſtitute of religion, I ſhould not account him a very wiſe man who would put equal confidence in her, as in what Job * denominates man's true wiſdom, namely, *the fear of the Lord.*

'Ay, but there are ſo many hypocrites 'that wear the maſk of religion, that one 'is not ſafe to place any truſt here at all.' True, ſome ſuch characters are ſtill to be found, though hypocriſy cannot be accounted the vice of the age. And do we not alſo ſometimes find villains under the maſk of honeſty? Now, if no perſon in his ſenſes ever imagined, that the detection of villany brought a diſcredit on honeſt men, or a ſuſpicion that there is no honeſty in the world, can any thing but the groſſeſt prejudice lead us to conclude unfavourably

* Job, xxviii. 28.

of religion, becauſe of the detection ſome hypocrites? The ſtandard-coin never ſinks in our eſtimation, in conſequence of the many diſcoveries that are daily made of artful but worthleſs counterfeits.

On the whole, therefore, agreeably to what I propoſed, in the third place, to prove, we ſee how neceſſary the aid of religion is for ſecuring fidelity to engagements, and for the diſcovery of truth in judicatories, both in civil cauſes and in criminal.

IV. I come now, in the fourth and laſt place, to obſerve the utility of religion to a ſtate, by the poſitive enforcement which it gives of equity and good government on the rulers, and of obedience and ſubjection on the people.

In regard to the firſt part of this head, I have, in ſome meaſure, prevented myſelf, when ſpeaking of the ſanctions of religion

ligion, and ſhowing, that they are the more neceſſary in the caſe of deſpotic ſovereigns, inaſmuch as being by their ſtation raiſed above controul, there is no check upon them beſide religion. I ſhall only, therefore, at this time, with all poſſible brevity, point out the general views that revelation gives of all human governors. It is this which reminds them, that magiſtracy is a truſt, for the faithful diſcharge whereof they are accountable to God, who in the courſe of his providence has conferred it on them; that conſequently they *who rule over men, ought to be juſt, ruling in the fear of God*; that they *judge not for man* ultimately, *but for the Lord, who is with them in the judgement* *. Is it a diſadvantage to mankind, that thoſe who are ſupreme here, and uncontroulable, are taught to reflect, that they muſt themſelves appear hereafter, in the quality of ſubjects, before the tribunal of him who is *higher than the higheſt*; and that their conduct, eſpecially in

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.; 2 Chron. xix. 6. 7.

in ruling and judging, muſt undergo a ſtrict ſcrutiny, under the eye of *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, that unerring judge, *who is no reſpecter of perſons, with whom there is no iniquity*, and in whoſe tremendous preſence the diſtinctions which obtain amongſt us mortals, of high and low, mighty and weak, rich and poor, are all entirely levelled? Nay, would it not, on the contrary, be of unſpeakable advantage to the world, that all magiſtrates, law-givers, and judges, were firmly perſuaded of theſe important truths?

On the other hand, if a pious ſenſe of religion is the beſt ſecurity for good government on the part of rulers, it is alſo the moſt effectual means of enſuring ſubmiſſion and obedience on the part of ſubjects. Without ſome impreſſions of this kind, it would be difficult to perſuade men that they are under any tie to obedience and ſubjection to others of their own ſpecies; when any ſtrong temptation from intereſt

intereſt or ambition ſhould incline them to revolt. Their ſubmiſſion would be ſuch only as neceſſity compelled, not as a ſenſe of duty diſpoſed them to yield. Conſequently they could have no motive to reſtrain them from rebellion, whenever it ſhould appear they could rebel ſucceſsfully. But religion enforces our allegiance, not from the fear of the magiſtrate, (a motive whoever which it leaves in full force), but from a principle of conſcience towards God; *not only for wrath*, ſays Paul *, *but* FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE. And Peter †, to the ſame purpoſe, *Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man*, FOR THE LORD'S SAKE. *For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men.*

THUS I have endeavoured briefly to illuſtrate and evince the important truth laid down in my text, That *righteouſneſs*, or religion, *exalteth a nation.* I have ſhewn, that

* Rom. xiii. 5. † 1 Peter, ii. 13. 15.

that in all the four ways enumerated,—to wit, by the tendency and extent of its laws; by the nature and importance of its ſanctions; by the aid it gives to the civil powers, in ſecuring fidelity, and in the diſcovery of truth; and by the poſitive enforcement of good government on rulers, and of obedience on ſubjects,—it conduces to the temporal good of the ſociety. This, I acknowledge, is comparatively but a ſecondary conſideration; for what is all worldly and temporary proſperity, compared with that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which ſhall hereafter be revealed? But though it be a conſideration much inferior to the other, yet as holy writ occaſionally directs our attention to it, we are certain, that it ought not to be overlooked. For had preſent advantages been totally unworthy the Chriſtian's notice, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles had never thought it worth while to obſerve to us*, that *godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having promiſe of the life that now is, and of that which*

* 1 Tim. iv. 8. 9.

which is to come; adding, *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation.*

I ſhall conclude with ſubjoining theſe two inferences.

Firſt, If the above repreſentation of things be juſt, the ſecular powers ought to give all poſſible countenance to religion, the principal ſupport of their authority, and to the ordinances of divine worſhip, the principal external means by which a ſenſe of religion is propagated and preſerved among mankind. If men in the more elevated ranks of life, thoſe men eſpecially who are veſted with a ſhare of either the legiſlative or the executive power, ſhould diſplay, in their conduct or converſation, a contempt of our Chriſtian profeſſion, they would not ſhow themſelves more plainly to be bad Chriſtians in the common acceptation of the term, than to be (what poſſibly they would like worſe to be accounted) injudicious magiſtrates, and ill affected citizens,

citizens, and conſequently in all reſpects bad members of the commonwealth. We all know how prone inferiors are to imitate their ſuperiors. And ſuch is the depravity of human nature, that the vices of the great are much more readily copied than their virtues. Every man (whatever his condition in the world may be) is obliged to be exemplary; but the obligation is much ſtronger on thoſe whoſe example, by reaſon of their exalted ſtations, is capable of being much more beneficial, or much more hurtful, than that of ordinary men.

Secondly, If religion is of ſuch indiſpenſable neceſſity for the ſupport of civil ſociety, what ſhall we think of the patriotiſm or public virtue of thoſe who aſſiduouſly endeavour, as far as their influence extends, to undermine its fundamental principles, and ſet men looſe from all its obligations? Do not ſuch appear to be as real enemies to their country, as to Chriſtianity? Some perhaps would not ſcruple

to

to add, enemies to human nature. Let people but coolly aſk themſelves, If our freethinkers, our ſpeculative and philoſophical latitudinarians, ſhould ſucceed in the dark deſign they ſeem ſometimes ſo zealouſly to proſecute; and if the diſbelief of the principles, and the diſregard to the rites of religion, which already appear in too many, and plainly ſhow their evil influence on the morals of the age, ſhould, agreeably to the ordinary courſe of things, deſcend to the loweſt ranks, and become univerſal, what will be the conſequence? Who can heſitate to anſwer, The utter fall of religion? Let it not be pretended, that there is no danger from the reaſonings of the ſceptic, becauſe theſe are far above the comprehenſion of vulgar underſtandings. For thoſe men will fondly adopt the concluſion who are incapable of apprehending aught of the premiſſes. The authority of great names among the learned will ever be to them a ſufficient foundation. And if once our faith is ſubverted, is any

ſo

ſo blind as to imagine, that religion will fall alone? Can her diſgrace fail to be accompanied by that of virtue and good manners? In ſuch general ruin,—what will be ſafe? Can we be vain enough to imagine,—that our laws and liberties, or any part of the conſtitution, will long ſurvive? The ſubject is too full of horror to expatiate on. I leave it to the ſerious reflections of my hearers.

THE

THE NATURE, EXTENT, AND IMPORTANCE, OF THE DUTY OF ALLEGIANCE:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ABERDEEN, December 12. 1776,

BEING THE FAST DAY APPOINTED BY THE KING, ON ACCOUNT OF THE REBELLION IN AMERICA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is not of any importance to the Public to be made acquainted with the motives which have induced the Author to publish the following Sermon. He will only say, that he had no such intention when he composed and preached it. But there are two points on which, he doubts not, many readers will think, he stands in need of an apology. Of them he begs a candid attention to what follows, as the best that he can offer.

It may be said, that little can be expected new, especially in a sermon, on a subject which has now so long engrossed the public attention, and engaged many able and ingenious writers on both sides. The Author readily admits the truth of this remark. If there be any thing here that can

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It may be ſaid, that little can be expected *new*, eſpecially in a ſermon, on a ſubject which has now ſo long engroſſed the public attention, and engaged many able and ingenious writers on both ſides. The Author readily admits the truth of this remark. If there be any thing here that can

be called *new*, it is the conſideration of what our religion teaches to be the duty of Chriſtians in circumſtances like ours. This topic has not been touched, at leaſt in any of thoſe writings which he has read on the preſent controverſy. But though there be little or nothing *new* in the thoughts, every author has his peculiar manner and arrangement. One manner is better adapted to one ſet of readers, another to another. If the ſentiments then be juſt, and if they be arranged and expreſſed with tolerable perſpicuity, it may be hoped that there are ſome to whom they will be uſeful.

The ſecond point on which the author finds he muſt apologize for himſelf, is his entering at all on ſuch a ſubject in a *ſermon*. Indeed the prejudices of ſome are ſo ſtrong on this article, that he ſcarcely expects that any thing he has to advance will entirely remove them. The cry is, 'What has the 'miniſter of the goſpel to do with matters

'of

'of ſtate, or Chriſtianity with human po-'litics?' The ambiguity of the terms *politics* and *matters of ſtate* gives a ſpecious appearance to the objection. The church, no doubt, would be a very improper place for the diſcuſſion of many points relating to national intereſt, and of queſtions of juriſprudence, which might be very pertinent in the cabinet or the ſenate. But when a queſtion ariſes that affects the title of the magiſtrate to demand, and the obligation of the ſubject to yield, obedience: if the precepts of the goſpel at all concern our conduct as *citizens*, it muſt be the duty of a Chriſtian paſtor to point out to his flock what theſe precepts command, and what they prohibit.

Our Saviour, in his laſt charge to his apoſtles, expreſsly enjoined them to teach all thoſe whom they ſhould convert and baptize, *to obſerve all things whatſoever he*

*had commanded them**. Now it is as really a commandment of our Lord, that we ſhould *render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſar's*, as that we ſhould *render to God the things that are God's* †. Have not his apoſtles accordingly, Paul and Peter in particular, given moſt explicit directions on this very head? Paul not only recommends this duty himſelf to Chriſtian congregations, but in the inſtructions he gives to Titus, who was alſo a miniſter, ſpecifies it by name as an important duty, which he ought not to neglect recommending to his people. *Put them in mind*, ſays he, *to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates* ‡. Can we then think ourſelves excuſed in omitting to teach and inforce ſo momentous a duty, ſo ſtrongly recommended to us both by the example and by the precept both of our Lord and of his apoſtles? In the general order Chriſt gave his diſciples

* Matth. xxviii. 20. † Matth. xxii. 21.

‡ Tit. iii. 1.

diſciples to teach the people to obſerve all things, whatſoever he had commanded them, were they at liberty to make an exception of this?

Some perhaps will reply, 'Were the duty recommended only in general terms by the miniſter, as a Chriſtian duty, no objection could reaſonably be made: But to enter into a detail of facts, or an argumentative diſcuſſion on ſuch a ſubject, is what appears unſuitable to the place.' To this the Author has only to anſwer, The manner, whether general or particular, derives its ſuitableneſs entirely from the occaſion and circumſtances. When people regularly do what they ought in any inſtance, and when their minds are in no danger of being perverted by falſe principles, it is perhaps enough to remark their obligations paſſingly. But the caſe is different, when by miſrepreſentations of fact, or by ſophiſtical arguments, their minds begin to be

alienated from their duty, and they learn to *call evil good, and good evil, to put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs, bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter.* It is then the buſineſs of the preacher, if preaching be not a mere matter of form, to do what he can to inform them better, both as to the fact, and as to the argument. Can then the obſervance of the duty we owe to magiſtrates, be an unſeaſonable ſubject at preſent, when ſo many are at ſuch uncommon pains (ſome doubtleſs through miſtake, and ſome through ill deſign) to undermine it?

The *pulpit* without queſtion would be an improper place for canvaſſing the economical regulations, which might properly be adopted in the government of families. But if tenets ſhould be advanced, and warmly recommended, totally ſubverſive of the honour due from children to their parents, and of the obedience due from ſervants to their maſters, would he deſerve the

the character of a minister of Christ, who chose to continue silent, and under the silly pretext, that the pulpit was not intended for discussing family affairs, would take no concern in the controversy? Shall we find men that are indefatigable in distributing *poison*, and shall not those who have it in their power, be at some pains to administer the *antidote*?

It has in like manner been urged, that 'Under these plausible pretences, the *pulpit* hath sometimes been made the instrument of raising *sedition*, and of doing the greatest mischief to the public.' The charge is indeed but too true. But is that a good reason for not employing it for the contrary purpose of inculcating *allegiance* and *loyalty*? The pulpit has also been often employed in the service of *error*. Shall it therefore never be used for the advancement of *truth*? It has often been perverted to be instrumental in kindling *persecution*.

Shall

Shall it therefore be accounted improper to uſe it in recommending *the moderation, the meekeſs, and the gentleneſs of Chriſt?* Beſides, will thoſe who abuſe the pulpit, by employing it to a bad purpoſe, be the leſs diſpoſed to do ſo, becauſe nobody dares oppoſe them from the pulpit?

From the manner in which ſome talk of the buſineſs of a preacher, one would imagine, that in their apprehenſions, he ought ever to be occupied (as preachers have been but too often occupied) in *doating about queſtions and ſtrifes of words*, diſcuſſing all the futile logomachies of the ſchools, which gender contention, envy, bigotry, and wrath, but *miniſter not to godly edifying*, to pious and practical inſtruction.

The Author begs leave to add, that he hopes the doctrine here maintained may be of ſome ſervice, independently of the American diſputes which have occaſioned its publication.

publication. There is a real danger arifing from the looſe and republican principles now ſo openly profeſſed, and ſo aſſiduouſly diſſeminated, through the Britiſh iſles; which, ſhould they ſtill make progreſs, as they ſeem to have done for ſome years paſt, might, after the preſent controverſy is ſettled and forgotten, involve this country in the moſt direful calamities. On the other hand he is happy to obſerve that this quarrel has excited ſome perſons of great learning and penetration, fully capable of doing juſtice to the ſubject, to examine more narrowly than had been done before, into the origin, nature, and end of *civil government* *. It may be expected as the conſequence, that the

* The public has been promiſed by an eminent writer, one entirely equal to the ſubject, an examination of *Mr Locke's Theory of Government.* It is earneſtly wiſhed by many, that an *inquiry* ſo uſeful in itſelf, and ſo peculiarly ſeaſonable at preſent, may not be unneceſſarily deferred.

the wild ſchemes of our political viſionaries, for there are viſionaries in politics as well as in religion, will in due time be properly expoſed, and at length abandoned by every body.

SER-

SERMON IV.

PROV. xxiv. 21.

Meddle not with them that are given to change.

OUR religion teaches us to conſider all afflictions as chaſtiſements for ſin, and as mercifully intended by our heavenly father to bring the afflicted to reflection and repentance. National calamaties we are taught to regard as the puniſhments of national vices, and as warnings to the people to bethink themſelves and reform. *In the day of adverſity conſider*, is an admonition equally

equally appoſite, as applied to individuals, and to nations.

When the trouble itſelf, whether private or public, is the immediate and natural conſequence of particular vices, it is more eſpecially a call to examine into thoſe vices which are the direct ſource of our calamities, that by the grace of God we may forſake and avoid them. Thus a bad ſtate of health cauſed by debauchery, ſpecially warns the ſuffering perſon of the neceſſity of temperance in the indulgence of appetite. And the miſeries of a civil war, whether incurred by immoderate ſtretches of power on the one ſide, or produced by a wanton abuſe of liberty on the other, are loud and particular calls to the correction of theſe enormities.

If this be a juſt repreſentation, no Chriſtian can reaſonably doubt that our preſent diſtreſsful and threatening circumſtances in regard to America, ought to be thus viewed by every Britiſh ſubject on both ſides of the

the Atlantic. War of every kind points more directly to the depravity of our minds and the corruption of our manners, than do thoſe public calamities, famine, peſtilence, and earthquake, which are conſidered as proceeding immediately from the hand of God. They are all to be regarded as the puniſhments, but not as the natural effects of ſin. Whereas war is to be viewed equally in both lights. *Whence come wars and fightings among ſt you*, ſays James, *come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in your members**? It is within the human breaſt that this mighty miſchief is conceived. There the fire is lighted up, which afterwards burſting forth ſets the world on flame.

In every war, then, foreign or domeſtic, there is on one ſide or the other, not ſeldom on both, ſome immorality or guilt which is the direct cauſe. The ſuperintendency of Providence is doubtleſs to be acknowledged in this, as in every other event. And therefore

* Jam. iv. 1.

therefore affliction of every kind ought to excite us to ſelf-examination, prayer, and repentance. But thoſe which people more directly bring upon themſelves, ought to lead them to inquire into the immediate cauſe, that ſo the preſent evil may, as far as depends on them, be ſoon remedied, and ſuch a proper ſenſe of their duty attained, as may at leaſt be ſome ſecurity, that they will not be inſtrumental in fomenting the latent miſchief, but will, on the contrary, do what they can, to check its progreſs. Beſides, to entertain juſt notions on theſe ſubjects is one of the ſureſt means of guarding men againſt the like evils in time to come.

Not indeed that wars of any kind, and eſpecially inteſtine wars, always ſpring from opinion or principle. Their primary and ordinary ſource is much more properly repreſented in the words of the inſpired writer, to be our *luſts* that *war in our members*. It is mens avarice, ambition, or revenge. At the ſame time it muſt be owned, that the

the firſt movers in ſuch commotions are but *few*, the bulk of their followers, miſled by their artifices and miſrepreſentations, drive on blindfold, as they are ſtimulated, not knowing what they do. Nothing therefore can more expoſe people to be the dupes of wicked and deſigning men, than either to have no principles at all on this ſubject, or to entertain wrong principles. *The few* can do nothing without *the many*. The former generally are hurried on by their paſſions, the latter by the erroneous notions which thoſe who find their account in deceiving them, are indefatigable in ſowing and cultivating. For this reaſon, if the groſs of the people be in the wrong, they are more to be pitied than condemned, for they often do the greateſt miſchief with the beſt intentions imaginable. Like Paul before his converſion, they have *a zeal* for God and for their country, but it is *not according to knowledge*. Like him alſo, many of them, we may reaſonably believe, would act a contrary part, if they ſhould come to be convinced of their error. When people

are gone a certain length in an evil courſe, we ſee from experience that it is next to impoſſible to reclaim or convince them. It is conſequently one of the beſt offices that we can do to our countrymen and fellow-Chriſtians, when pernicious errors begin to be diffuſed, and to be plauſibly, or at leaſt popularly ſupported, to uſe our utmoſt endeavours in the way of prevention, by propagating and defending what both reaſon and Scripture ſhow to be the truth.

This conſideration, you will readily ſuppoſe, has led me to make choice of theſe words of Solomon as the ground of my diſcourſe, *Meddle not with them that are given to change.* Our gracious Sovereign has very properly called us on this occaſion, to humble ourſelves before the Divine Majeſty, to implore his merciful interpoſition in our favour, that being warned by the tremendous judgments of a civil war raging in the colonies, we may be induced to repent of our ſins, amend our lives, and thus avert the divine anger: I judged, therefore,

therefore, that I could not better employ a ſmall portion of a day ſet apart for ſo pious a purpoſe, than in arming you againſt thoſe errors in particular, which have contributed ſo much to our preſent calamities; and in ſhowing the obligations which as men, as citizens, and as Chriſtians, you lie under to give obedience to the powers which Providence has ſet over you, and *not to meddle with them that are given to change*; that is, to avoid giving your countenance or aid, either by ſpeech or by action, to the meaſures of thoſe who would, on ſlight pretexts, ſubvert all eſtabliſhed order, and throw every thing into confuſion.

I am not ignorant that it may plauſibly be urged againſt the propriety of diſcuſſing theſe points in this audience, that *very few* of *us* can be charged with entertaining principles tending to vindicate the reſiſtance made to authority in the remote parts of the Britiſh empire. In general, therefore, we need not a refutation of opinions which

we do not hold. The aſſertion I acknowledge to be juſt in point of fact, and rejoice that on the beſt grounds I can affirm that it is. But I am far from thinking it concluſive in point of argument. Though there be *few*, there are *ſome*. And ſuch writings as, in my judgment, inſtill and propagate the moſt unchriſtian and moſt dangerous doctrines on this ſubject, are daily circulated amongſt us. *The few* may in proceſs of time grow to be *the many*. The greateſt ills are often inconſiderable in their beginning; and ſometimes the moſt memorable revolutions may be traced up to very ſlight cauſes. Frequent *miſrepreſentations* and clamours breed diſcontent. *Diſcontent* gradually produces diſaffection. *Diſaffection* long continued ſettles into *diſloyalty*; and this laſt waits but an opportunity to bring forth *rebellion*. Preventive remedies, it is well known, are commonly more effectual than corrective ones. And often, had the proper medicines been taken in time, thoſe diſeaſes might have been cured, which, allowed through neglect to become inveterate,

rate, baffle the art of the phyſician. Beſides, the medicine I mean to adminiſter, is of that ſafe kind, which, if it do no ſervice, or be not neceſſary, will do no hurt.

It is only by the inſtruction and reformation of particulars, however ſmall a part each is of the whole, that the general inſtruction and reformation can be effected. And the national ſentiments are no other than thoſe which prevail with the majority of the individuals of whom the nation is compoſed. Let us then, in the preſent great national conteſt, inquire impartially where the radical error lies; for that there is an error ſomewhere, is allowed on both ſides.

Now the better we are informed in the rights of magiſtracy in general, and in the chief circumſtances of the preſent caſe in particular, there is the greater probability that our conduct ſhall be regulated by the obligations we lie under, and that it ſhall be ſteady and uniform. On theſe two topics,

therefore, *the rights of magiſtracy*, and *the grounds of the preſent colonial war*, I purpoſe, with the aid of heaven, to offer a few obſervations.

THE precept in my text, *Meddle not with them that are given to change*, evidently prohibits us from favouring innovations in matters of government, or concurring in violent and irregular meaſures, for the purpoſe of effecting ſome change either in the governors or in the form of government. Such alterations or amendments in the laws as may be regularly and conſtitutionally introduced, and may be conducive to the improvement of the body politic, are by no means comprehended in the prohibition given by this ſage monarch. It is, on the contrary, the duty of every one in office, to exert the power which the conſtitution gives him, in ſuch a way as will moſt promote the public welfare, correcting whatever is amiſs, and improving whatever is found defective. The precept contained in my text may no doubt be tranſgreſſed either by the

the *governors* or by the *governed*. It is with regard to the latter, that I intend at this time principally to conſider it: And for this end I muſt beg your patient attention to the following remarks.

Firſt, it ought to be remembered, that the general precept to be obſerved by the people in regard to their rulers is, to obey them. *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers*, ſays Paul, and *He who reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God.* Again, *Be ye ſubject therefore, not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake* *. To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle Peter, *Submit yourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake, whether it be to the king as ſupreme, or to governors, as to them that are ſent by him, for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.* He adds, *For ſo is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men* †.

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 5. † 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15.

'Are we then to conclude, that reſiſt-
'ance to governors is in all caſes unlawful,
'and that whatever part they act, however
'oppreſſive and tyrannical, the governed
'have no choice but obedience and ſub-
'miſſion?' I do by no means affirm this. There are few general rules that admit no exception. Conſider the commandment, *Thou ſhalt not kill* *. Does it import that in no poſſible circumſtances one man is permitted to take the life of another? No certainly. Notwithſtanding this unlimited prohibition, we all allow, and have ſufficient warrant from Scripture for allowing, that in ſeveral caſes, as in the judicial puniſhment of crimes, in ſelf-defence, and in lawful war, it not only may be vindicated, but is even a duty, to deprive another of life. Nor let it be urged, that the term rendered *kill*, ought to have been tranſlated *commit murder*; for it is certain that the Hebrew word is of as extenſive ſignification as the Engliſh, and appiled indifferently to lawful as to unlawful killing. *Children obey your parents*, ſays

* Exod. xx. 13.

ſays the apoſtle Paul, *IN ALL THINGS.* The ſame injunction is alſo given to ſervants in regard to their maſters *. This, one would think, excludes all exception, if words can exclude it. Yet I believe no Chriſtian will urge, that there would be an obligation to obedience from this precept, ſhould a parent command his child, or a maſter command his ſervant, *to ſteal.* I ſhall offer but one other inſtance, an inſtance which nearly reſembles the point in hand. Our Lord has given us this expreſs prohibition, *Reſiſt not evil* †, and that without any reſtriction whatever. Yet if this were to be underſtood by Chriſtians as admitting no exception, it would among them aboliſh magiſtracy itſelf. For what is *magiſtracy*, but, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, a bulwark erected for the defence of the ſociety, and conſequently for the very purpoſe of *reſiſting evil*, for repelling injuries offered or committed, either by foreign enemies from without, or by its own corrupted members from within? Therefore,

* Col. iii. 20, 22. † Matt. v. 39.

Therefore, unleſs the nature of the thing require it, we cannot conclude ſo much from a general propoſition.

And that the nature of the thing does not in his caſe require it, is manifeſt from this conſideration, that government obliges us in conſcience to obedience and ſubmiſſion, only becauſe it is the *means* appointed by providence, for promoting one of the moſt important ends, *the good of ſociety*. If this inſtitution therefore ſhould, in any inſtance, ſo far degenerate into tyranny, that all the miſeries of a civil war conſequent on reſiſtance, would be leſs terrible than the ſlavery and oppreſſion ſuffered under the government, then, and only then, could reſiſtance be ſaid to be either incumbent as a duty, or even lawful. It cannot reaſonably be denied that the principle of ſelf-defence is as natural and juſtifiable in communities, as individuals.

Thus much I thought it neceſſary to premiſe, for the ſake of truth, and that it might

might not be imagined, I mean to argue on the ſlaviſh, unnatural, and juſtly exploded, principles of *paſſive obedience* and *non-reſiſtance*; principles whoſe manifeſt tendency is the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of deſpotiſm. At the ſame time it is but doing juſtice to the argument, to take notice, that if there be a danger on the one hand, of tying the knot of allegiance, which binds the ſubject to the ſovereign too hard, there is no leſs danger on the other, of making it too looſe. Nothing is more common than for people to run from one extreme to another. We have indeed happily abandoned the abſurd tenets above-mentioned, but is there no reaſon to dread that many in this iſland are running precipitately into the oppoſite error? an error whoſe direct tendency is *anarchy*, which commonly terminates in uſurpation and tyranny, the very thing propoſed to be avoided by reſiſtance. That we may be properly guarded againſt ſo fatal a miſtake, I hope, my brethren, to be indulged on this head a little further, whilſt I conſider as briefly as poſſible the

extent

extent both of the precept and of the exception.

The *extent* of the precept to obey governors can only be aſcertained by attending to the *end* of government. Now the end of government is, as was obſerved, the *good* of ſociety, eſpecially of the governed, who make the major part. Paul, ſpeaking of the magiſtrate, ſays, *He is the miniſter of God to thee for good* *. It will be aſked on the other ſide, 'Can this conſideration entitle 'him to obedience, when he adopts a 'meaſure, that inſtead of promoting the 'public welfare, is really hurtful?' That we may be furniſhed with a proper anſwer to this queſtion, we muſt remark, firſt, that the apoſtle mentions the end of *magiſtracy*, which is the good of ſociety, as the great foundation of allegiance, not the end of every *meaſure* which the magiſtrate may think proper to adopt. He is but a man, and therefore fallible as well as others. He is liable both to error and to vice. Many meaſures

* Rom. xiii. 4.

meaſures he may adopt that are improper; notwithſtanding which, the end of the office, the *common good*, may be promoted by him. And true public ſpirit incites us equally, in what regards the community, to prefer the greateſt of different good things and the leaſt of different ills. Now there may be many bad meaſures adopted by the ruling powers, which nevertheleſs could not do half the miſchief that would neceſſarily enſue from the ſubverſion of authority. For it ought always on this ſubject to be taken into conſideration, that reſiſtance ſtrikes immediately, not only againſt the particular meaſure reſiſted, but againſt the office of the magiſtrate, and therefore tends totally to ſubvert authority, and unhinge the conſtitution. If then by reſiſting, we looſe, as much as in us lies, the bands of ſociety, and introduce anarchy with all its baneful conſequences, on account of any meaſures, the ill effects whereof are not ſo much to be dreaded as thoſe wherein the nation would be involved by

the

the diſſolution of government, we run into a greater evil to avoid a leſs.

Let it be further obſerved, that in *bad* meaſures themſelves there is a great difference. Some are denominated bad becauſe *inexpedient*, that is, not well adapted to the end intended by them. Thus a tax may be laid on one commodity which diſtreſſes the people more, and yields leſs to the revenue, than if it had been laid on another. Others are termed bad becauſe *immoral*, as when any thing is commanded contrary to the law of God. In regard to the firſt there cannot be a ſhadow of doubt. For if every man were at liberty to judge for himſelf how far the means adopted by his ſuperiors were fitted to the end, and conſequently how far he were obliged to give obedience to the laws, there could be no government at all. The people would be either in a ſtate of perpetual warfare, or at perfect liberty to do as they pleaſe. If the later were the caſe, it would be abſurd to talk of *laws* or *orders*; the only proper

terms

terms would be *counſels* or *advices*. Among ſuch, and only among ſuch, it might be juſtly ſaid, 'Every man is his own legiſlator.' But this ſtate of things (for a conſtitution it cannot be called) may ſuit the perfection of angels, who are all good and wiſe, but will never ſuit the pravity of human nature. In regard to the other ſort of bad meaſures, where ſomething *ſinful* is enjoined, it is certain that no man is bound to yield an active obedience to a human law, which, either from the light of nature or from revelation, he is perſuaded to be contrary to the divine law. Here the maxim takes place, 'We ought to obey 'God rather than man.'

But even as to ſuch laws, the ſubject is not always entitled to oppoſe the magiſtrate by force. In the days of the apoſtles, the Chriſtians ſubmitted to any ſufferings rather than give obedience to the heathen laws in favour of idolatry; yet they neither made war upon the magiſtrate, nor pulled down the images, alters, and temples of idolaters.

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'Is religion then never a ſufficient ground 'of active oppoſition to the ruling powers?' That cannot juſtly be inferred neither. Government has for its object the *whole* ſociety, not a ſeparate *part*. There is therefore a great difference between what may be called an attack on the rights both natural and civil of *the whole*, ſuch as is the religion of the community, and an infringement of the natural rights of *a few*.

A man's right to his opinions may be truly ſaid to be both *natural* and *unalienable*. As they depend not on his will, it is not in his power to alter them. And no law is obligatory which commands a man to lie. Religious toleration therefore may juſtly be conſidered as a natural right. The two moſt definable, though not the only, limits to all civil laws are the *impoſſible* and the *immoral*. A law commanding men to believe certain religious tenets, attempts the *impoſſible*, and is therefore not ſo properly tyrannical as abſurd. Laws can have no more effect on the belief or opinions of any

who

who are capable of forming opinions, than they can have on the bodily ſenſes. A law commanding men, under pains and penalties, to profeſs opinions in religion which they diſbelieve, enjoins ſomething *immoral*, and is therefore at once impious, tyrannical, and abſurd. It undermines its own foundation, requiring an obedience which cannot be yielded without ſubverting the authority of conſcience, whence all ſorts of obligation civil and religious originate. It propoſes what is in politics the greateſt of abſurdities, to make people *good citizens*, by making them *bad men*. But the duties enjoined by the law of nature may alſo be enforced by civil laws under civil ſanctions. Of this kind are almoſt all the criminal laws in every country.

Further, there is a great difference between the ſubmiſſion due to meaſures tending to the preſervation of what is eſtabliſhed, and the ſubmiſſion due to meaſures tending to its ſubverſion; and that without taking into conſideration the goodneſs or the bad-

neſs of the eſtabliſhment. The former is favourable to public tranquillity and order, becauſe conducing to that which the community, whether right or wrong, eſteems it good. The latter is hardly ever attempted without endangering, and not ſometimes without overturning, the public tranquillity. Now as it is a principle of common ſenſe, that a leſs evil ſhould be born to prevent a greater, ſo it is a fundamental principle in government, whoſe end is common utility, that private intereſt ſhould give place to public. It holds in general therefore, that no man, no body of men, conſtituting but a ſmaller part of the community, are entitled to reſiſt the magiſtrate by force in what is properly a private quarrel, even though they ſhould think themſelves, and be in fact, unjuſtly treated by him. For there is a very great difference between not being obliged to give an active obedience, and being entitled to make an active reſiſtance.

I admit that caſes may be ſuppoſed ſo atrociouſly

trociouſly barbarous, that nature would reclaim againſt the ſeverity of this doctrine, and the heart of every feeling perſon would juſtify the oppreſſed in giving way to the impulſe of that moſt natural and rooted principle, *ſelf-defence*. But ſuch caſes are uncommon any where, and hardly ever to be found in free or limited governments. Yet even in ſuch caſes, the very utmoſt we can ſay is, that humanity and candour would admit the greatneſs of the provocation as an apology for the reſiſtance, which would be conſidered as *excuſable*, not regarded as incumbent. In ſupport of authority a poſitive *precept* is pleaded; in ſupport of ſuch a reſiſtance as has been now ſuppoſed, the utmoſt that could be urged is an implied *exception* reſulting from extraordinary circumſtances. In every caſe in which the rule holds, to tranſgreſs it is an invaſion of the *rights of others*, not only the rights of the magiſtrate, but the right of the ſociety, whoſe peace and order we diſturb; whereas in the particular caſe above ſtated, not to avail one's ſelf of the

exception, is only to yield of *one's own right*, a thing which in moſt caſes is entirely in one's own power.

Our duty as Chriſtians often requires us to act this part, and to reſign a private claim for the good of others. The example of our Lord teaches it, who, to avoid contention and offence, provided himſelf miraculouſly with the tribute money, when he might have pleaded a legal exemption from paying it *. To ſuch particular caſes the precept, *Reſiſt not evil*, ought to be underſtood as principally applicable. That we ought patiently to endure private injuries, rather than by endeavouring to obtain redreſs, hurt a more important and public intereſt, is alike the dictate of true patriotiſm and genuine Chriſtianity. *Why do ye not rather*, ſays Paul to the Corinthians, *take wrong? Why do ye not rather ſuffer yourſelves to be defrauded* †? Rather than what? Rather than bring ſcandel on the

* Mat. xvii. 24, &c. † Cor. vi. 7.

the Chriſtian community, rather than breed variances amongſt yourſelves.

I obſerve further, that the cauſe which juſtifies reſiſtance would not only need to be both *important* and *public*, but clearly and by the community *underſtood* to be ſo. It were madneſs in *one* or a *few*, in a caſe wherein the peace and felicity of ALL are concerned, to decide for the whole. The immediate miſchiefs to ſociety would be *manifeſt*, the remote advantages *uncertain*. Nor is it leſs evident, that where the caſe is in any degree doubtful, our only ſafe way is to follow the precept which enjoins obedience, and not an exception, about the exiſtence of which we are dubious. Nor needs any other reaſon be aſſigned for this conduct, than that it is conformable to the general precept, which we are commanded to follow as our rule. As this therefore is a Chriſtian duty in every caſe, unleſs where the exception actually obtains, it is incumbent on us in every caſe, unleſs where we perceive that the exception obtains. *Who-*

ſoever is not of faith, is ſin *. There is no middle way. The divine precept is ſolely in favour of obedience; to diſobey is in fact to decide in favour of an *exception*, which, unleſs it be glaring, ought never to be ſuppoſed to exiſt. In regard to it the law is ſilent. It is not of the ſpirit of the law to put extraordinary caſes. It leaves ſuch, from the manifeſt urgency and importance of the circumſtances, to ſuggeſt the neceſſity of a deviation from the rule. *To reſiſt* has been, with the greateſt juſtice, ſtyled in the body politic *a deſperate remedy*, as it brings into the moſt imminent hazard its very exiſtence; it would then be no other than diſtraction to employ it, if we were doubtful whether the diſeaſe of the ſtate were *deſperate*, or even perhaps whether ſhe laboured under a diſeaſe or not. If diſobedience and reſiſtance are to be regarded (as by all wiſe and good men they have ever been regarded) as at beſt but neceſſary evils, common ſenſe requires, that we

* Rom. xiv. 23.

we be convinced of the neceſſity, before we recur to the evil *.

* It does not overthrow this ſyſtem, as has been objected, that the people muſt judge, whether in any exigency that ariſes, they ought to recur to reſiſtance; nor does it follow, that they have a *right* to reſiſt, whenever they *think* it neceſſary. Their right commences with the *real*, not with the *imagined*, *neceſſity*. They judge therefore, and muſt conſider themſelves as judging, in peril of incurring, by raſh judgment, the complicated guilt of murder, rebellion, and the worſt of parricides, the deſtruction of their country. Antecedently to every action that can be called a man's own, he muſt both judge and determine. But did ever any body conclude hence, that he has a right to do whatever he determines; in other words, that he cannot determine wrong? 'War is a dreadful evil.' Yet one nation has a right to make war on another *in certain caſes*. Now, if there is ſuch a right, every nation muſt judge for itſelf, when it ought to be exerciſed. But was it ever deduced as a conſequence, that this right cannot mean leſs than *a right in every people to make war on every other, whenever they think it neceſſary?* On the contrary, 'thoſe who involve a people in it *needleſsly*,' I uſe the objector's own words, 'will find they have much to 'anſwer for. Nothing can ever juſtify it, but the ne-'ceſſity of it,' (ſurely he means *real*, not *ſuppoſed*, or *pretended*, neceſſity, for this is never wanting) 'to ſe-

'cure

In theſe obſervations I have all along argued from what both reaſon and Scripture ſhow to be the end of government, *public utility*, 'cure ſome *eſſential* intereſt againſt unjuſt attacks.' Have they leſs to anſwer for, who kindle a civil war, of all kinds the moſt dreadful. Will leſs ſerve to juſtify it?——In this particular, our republicans have advanced higher claims in favour of *the people*, than the votaries to the patriarchal ſcheme ever did in favour of *the ſovereign*. The former ſcruple not to aſcribe a real *infallibility* to the multitude. I never heard of any of the latter, however bigotted to the principle of divine, hereditary, indefeaſible right, that attributed ſo much of divinity to the monarch. Theſe will not heſitate to admit that a king may be a *tyrant*, though, in their judgement, it does not belong to the nation either to check, or to chaſtiſe him; whereas the former will not allow that the people ever can be *rebels*. I am hopeful, however, they will not maintain that the people every where, and in all ages, have been endowed with this *infallible* diſcernment of what is neceſſary. Will they ſay that the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs were poſſeſſed of it when they compelled Aaron to make the golden calf, and celebrated a feſtival in its honour; or when, upon hearing the report of the ſpies, they tumultuouſly clamoured for the election of a captain to lead them back to Egypt? Yet they ſeem to have been almoſt unanimous in *thinking* theſe meaſures abſolutely *neceſſary*.

utility, a principle ſufficiently ſimple and intelligible, and from which alone every juſt limitation may eaſily be deduced. I have not mentioned *the original compact*, one of the hackneyed topics of writers on politics. My reaſon is, I neither underſtand the word, as applied by thoſe writers, nor know where to find the thing to which they refer. That there may have been politics founded in compact, I make no queſtion; but the hiſtory of the world will ſatisfy every reaſonable perſon, that in many more caſes, perhaps thirty to one, ſtates have ariſen from cauſes widely different. If thoſe, however, who uſe the expreſſion, mean no more when they ſay that magiſtrates have violated *the original compact*, and are therefore no longer entitled to the obedience of the ſubject, than I mean when I ſay, they ſo manifeſtly counteract *the great end of magiſtracy*, as renders reſiſtance itſelf leſs a public evil than obedience, I ſhall admit the phraſe, though I cannot help conſidering it as both an obſcure and an improper way of expreſſing a plain ſentiment.

timent. But if ſomething further be meant, I ſhould like, before I ſay any thing for, or againſt it, to have ſome evidence of the *exiſtence* of ſuch a compact, and likewiſe to know a little of its *contents*. As the matter ſtands, I conſider it as one of thoſe phraſes which are very convenient for the profeſſed diſputant, becauſe they are both indefinite and dark, and may be made to comprehend under them all the chimeras of his own imagination. Many ſuch have been introduced into this controverſy, which, as they only ſerve to perplex it, are very apt to miſlead the unwary.

I return to my ſubject. Various circumſtances in different countries have given riſe to the eſtabliſhment of various forms of government. Though theſe are far from being equal in point of excellency, *public good* requires, that, except in caſes of extremity, each ſhould be preſerved from violence *. It may be objected that, on my principles,

* ‘ But does not this ſentiment,’ ſay our adverſaries, ‘ aſcribe right to poſſeſſion however acquired? Might ‘ it

principles, a bad conſtitution can never be amended or improved. I anſwer, To attempt the amendment by force, that is, by ſubverting the public peace, and throwing all into confuſion, is to ſeek to attain a *diſtant good*, about the attainment of which we are *uncertain*, at the price of a *certain* and *immediate evil*, in all probability greater than the good can compenſate, if attained. In all ſtates, eſpecially in all civilized ſtates, as was already hinted, there are conſtitutional methods of effecting uſeful alterations and improvements. Againſt the proper application of theſe, there can lie no objection. Thoſe only are the innovators alluded to in my text, who by irregular, violent, and unconſtitutional methods, by reſiſtance and revolt, ſeek to ſubvert the eſtabliſhed order.

Here

' it not ſerve to legalize even the *American Congreſs*?" Not at all. No poſſeſſion that cannot be denominated *peaceable* and *eſtabliſhed*, in other words, no poſſeſſion from which the people, inſtead of deriving the bleſſings of order, internal peace, and protection, reap nothing but the greateſt of curſes, confuſion, civil war, and the total inſecurity of every thing valuable, property, liberty, and life, can be legalized by a ſentiment founded in regard to public tranquillity.

Here a queſtion may pertinently be put, 'May it not happen, that the innovations 'which give riſe to national calamities 'have originated with the *rulers?* If they, 'by aſſuming an unuſual power, overleap 'the bounds of the conſtitution, fixed by 'immemorial cuſtom, by fundamental laws, 'or by poſitive convention, do they not 'come within the deſcription of the per-'ſons given to change?' It is not to be denied that this may be the caſe, and ſometimes has been. It is beſides an undoubted truth, that the *rights and liberties of the people* are as real, and as valuable, and ought to be held as ſacred, a part of the conſtitution, as *the powers and prerogatives of the magiſtrate.*

When *Charles* I. attempted to govern without a parliament, and to impoſe taxes on the people by his own authority alone, he, doubtleſs, and all thoſe who adviſed and abetted ſuch meaſures, were to be ranked with *them that are given to change.* Nay, however unuſual the application may be,

be, it was properly they who did not ſubmit to what Paul denominates *the ordinance of God, the powers that be.* The king with us poſſeſſes the whole executive power, and conſtitutes an eſſential branch of the legiſlative; but as the executive, from the nature of the thing, is ſubordinate to the legiſlative, he, by aſſuming in his own perſon the authority of the whole legiſlature, uſurped what did not belong to him, and thereby oppoſed God's ordinance. But though the uſurpation may be juſtly ſaid to have originated with the crown, it cannot be affirmed that it ended there. The Houſe of Commons of the long parliament quickly ſhowed the ſame propenſity to uſurpation and deſpotic power. They uſurped the authority of the crown and of the peers, both which conſtituent members of the ſtate they ſuppreſſed, taking the whole buſineſs of legiſlation on themſelves. They uſurped likewiſe the rights of the people. Delegated for a limited time only, they maintained by the ſword the poſſeſſion they had once obtained, after the time in which they had

had any *legal* authority was expired; and were at laſt ignominiouſly expelled by a new uſurper, a creature of their own; thus *receiving in themſelves that recompence of their error which was meet.*

They eminently evinced the danger and the madneſs of deſtroying a good conſtitution, in the deluſive hope of erecting, what ſome of them no doubt fancied, a better, in its ſtead. The wounds given by the ſtretches of prerogative had been healed, the public grievances redreſſed, ſufficient ſecurity of the rights and privileges of all orders obtained, when the Houſe of Commons, obſerving their aſcendency over the Crown and the Houſe of Lords, and intoxicated with the power they had acquired, beyond their moſt ſanguine expectation, and beyond the example of all former parliaments, not knowing where to ſtop, perſiſted in their violence, till they involved the nation in blood, murdered the king, and overſet the conſtitution.

BUT deſcending from former times and from the general topic of *the rights of the magiſtrate, and the duty of the ſubject*, let us now inquire a little (which was the ſecond thing I propoſed to do) into *the merits of the conteſt* wherein we are at this time unhappily engaged with our revolted brethren in America. The examination of this queſtion will lead to the diſcuſſion of ſome points, which, though affecting the general nature and foundations of government, could not have been ſo properly introduced under the former head. Can we then with juſtice charge the civil war that now rages in our colonies, on the tyranny or miſgovernment of the ruling powers? Has any thing been done that could be ſaid juſtly to provoke their revolt, to render reſiſtance the neceſſary means of *ſelf-preſervation*, and ſo to exempt them, in uſing it, from the charge of rebellion? Or, on the other hand, Have artful and ambitious men, both on their ſide of the water and on ours, had the addreſs, for their own private ends, to miſlead a people whom wealth and luxury

have

have corrupted, and rendered prone to licentiouſneſs and faction? Have theſe *falſe friends* and *ſham patriots* inflamed their minds with imaginary invaſions of their rights, and with fears and jealouſies for which there is no foundation? In ſuch a ſituation, it is of great conſequence to people to examine the matter impartially. This is the firſt ſtep, and when properly executed, gives ſome ground to hope, that on whichever ſide the fault lies, it may in time be corrected.

The ſcene of action, it is true, lies far from us; but we are all deeply concerned in the conſequences. Beſides, in a government which has ſo great a mixture of democracy as the Britiſh, it is of importance that the meaſures of the adminiſtration be ſupported by the favour of the people, if right; and that they be checked by the general diſapprobation, if wrong. The one tends to confirm, the other to correct, them. In this country, no miniſtry (and it is our happineſs and glory that it is ſo) can long

long perſiſt in a train of meaſures univerſally condemned. But if, amongſt us, ſuch is the influence of the popular ſuffrage, we ought all to be the more careful that we be well informed. The ferment excited in the colonies, and the clamour raiſed by a faction amongſt ourſelves, are, in one view, of the moſt alarming nature. The clamour is not levelled barely againſt the miniſtry, or even againſt the government, but againſt the whole legiſlature of the country. Its too manifeſt aim is to foment in the people a ſeditious and ungovernable ſpirit, deſtructive of all authority, than which nothing can be conceived of more ruinous tendency to the conſtitution. Nothing could vindicate this conduct but the moſt flagrant danger, of our religion, laws, and liberties. And I will venture to affirm, what will not be contradicted by the candid and judicious, that theſe great national concerns were never in leſs danger from the ruling powers, than in the preſent reign.

I am ſenſible that diſcuſſions of this ſort

are not eaſily adapted to the pulpit, nor can a *political* controverſy, as it is called (though in fact a controverſy in which *morals* and *religion* are nearly concerned) be accounted level to the capacity of an ordinary audience. I ſhall not therefore enter into the numerous articles that have been made matter of diſpute ſince this queſtion began to be agitated. This is what neither propriety nor your time will permit me to do. But that our allegiance and loyalty may be not only more *rational*, but more *durable*, as proceeding from knowledge and principle, I ſhall conſider a little that which may be called *the hinge* of the controverſy, and which gave riſe to all the other and ſmaller points in queſtion. Now this point is evidently the right claimed by the Britiſh Parliament, *to tax* our fellow-ſubjects in America.

And firſt, in matters of government and legiſlation, that which immemorial *cuſtom* has eſtabliſhed, unleſs oppoſed by ſome natural or divine law, is always regarded as obligatory.

obligatory. Now that taxes have been impoſed by parliament, even from the firſt ſettlement of the colonies, has been put beyond a doubt by the writers on that ſide of the queſtion *. Firſt, they were taxed, and under the odious form of an exciſe too, by the *long parliament* in the time of the civil wars, by that very patriotic parliament which the American demagogues ſet up to themſelves as a ſtandard, every way worthy their imitation. After the reſtoration, they were in *Charles II's.* time taxed by parliament. Nor was this meaſure conſidered as unconſtitutional after the revolution. On the contrary, the former act was, in the reign of *William III.* confirmed and explained by a new one. In Queen *Anne's* time, the act eſtabliſhing the poſt-office, and the act for raiſing a duty from ſeamen for the ſupport of Greenwich hoſpital, are made to bind the colonies as well as the iſland of

* See The Rights of Great Britain aſſerted. Remarks on the 13th Parliament. Anſwer to the Declaration of the Congreſs, &c.

Great Britain. There are acts to the ſame purpoſe in the reigns of *George I.* and of *George II.* To theſe acts the colonies then ſubmitted; for they had not then diſcovered their natural and unalienable right to pay no taxes, but ſuch as have been impoſed with their own conſent. The real ground of the difference is, Then they were poorer and more humble, now they are richer and more proud.

Nor do their *charters*, as has been falſely pretended, give any ſupport to ſuch exemption. In one of them the right of taxing by parliament is reſerved in expreſs terms, and in others it is reſerved manifeſtly by implication, in as much as immunities from being taxed are granted for a limited term of years, in ſome longer, in others ſhorter.

But it is ridiculous to pretend an exemption from being taxed, whilſt they acknowledge, as they have always done till of late, the power of the Britiſh Parliament to make

make laws on other articles which ſhall bind the colonies. Ye ſome are inconſiſtent enough to maintain, tha our legiſlature has power to do the one, but not the other. I ſhould be glad to know on what the diſtinction is founded. Not on any any poſitive convention; or on any act of the legiſlature aſſerting its right in the one caſe, and diſclaiming it in the other. It is not pretended. Is then the diſtinction one of thoſe which are founded in the nature of things? Impoſſible. What! Have we the command of their perſons, their liberties, their lives, but not of their purſes? May we declare what is criminal in them, what is not; and what crimes ſhall be puniſhed with impriſonment, what with exile, what with ſtripes, and what with death, but cannot affect a ſingle ſhilling of their coin? Is then the union between a man and his money more intimate than that between his ſoul and his body? One would be tempted to believe, that it had been in the head of ſome *Miſer*, whoſe *treaſure* is his

God, that this abſurd conceit had firſt been gendered.

I own, I am exceedingly ſurpriſed at the inconſiſtency of thoſe men, in other reſpects not deficient in underſtanding, who maintain the legality of the *navigation act*, confining the trade of the plantations, and yet deny the legality of *taxing* them. The former is, in my opinion, in ſeveral reſpects, more exceptionable than the latter; and, in ſome inſtances at leaſt, a hardſhip on them, without being an advantage to us. But pray, conſider, wherein lies the difference? We, by reſtraining part of their trade to ourſelves, may oblige them, in ſome inſtances, to ſell to us for ſixpence the pound, what, if the market were open, they would get ſevenpence for from others. Is not this preciſely the ſame as to them, as if we ſhould permit them to ſell where they pleaſe, and exact in name of duty a penny on the pound-weight? It is even worſe; for by confining the trade, the demand is leſſened, and conſequently a check is put on the

the induſtry that would be employed on that article.

But let it not be imagined, that all the reſtraints are laid on the coloniſts for *our* benefit, as has been moſt uncandidly pretended by ſome of the advocates on the other ſide. There are many reſtraints laid on us alſo by the legiſlature for *their* benefit. Perhaps it were be ter for both, that all ſuch acts were reviſed. Taxes, if impoſed with judgment, are generally leſs prejudicial than monopolies. But (whatever be in this) that the reſtrictions are reciprocal is manifeſt. In regard to ſome of their ſtaple commodities, we are, for their benefit, prohibited, under ſevere penalties, to cultivate them in our own country; at the ſame time that we are not allowed to purchaſe them from any other nation, though we ſhould get them both cheaper and better. Drawbacks and bounties are given to our merchants on exporting hence American commodities imported. This is an advantage to the Americans, as,

by raiſing the demand and price, it encou-rages their cultivation and labour, and an advantage to our traders in ſuch articles, whom it enables to deal more extenſively, and underſell others, but to the nation in general a detriment rather than a profit, inaſmuch as the nation muſt always, by ſome impoſt or other, compenſate to the government the value of the bounty.

Indeed the more conſiſtent patrons of the American cauſe, deny that the legiſlative power of the Britiſh ſenate can juſtly extend to the colonies in any thing. If you aſk them, Why? The anſwer is ready. 'Men can-'not be bound by laws to which they have 'not given their *conſent*.' This appears to them an *axiom* in politics, as clear as any in mathematics. And though for a firſt principle, it has been wonderfully late of being diſcovered, they are ſo confident of its ſelf-evidence, that they never attempt to prove it; they rather treat with contempt every perſon who is ſo weak as to queſtion it. Theſe gentlemen, however, will excuſe me,

as

as I am not certain that I underſtand them, and am a little nice about firſt principles, when I aſk, what is the preciſe meaning they affix to the term *conſent?* For I am much afraid, that if they had begun with borrowing from the mathematicians, the laudable practice of giving accurate *definitions* of their terms, and always adhering to thoſe definitions, we had never heard of many of their newfangled *axioms.*

It is certain that, in the common acceptation, *conſent* denotes a declared concurrence in opinion in regard to any meaſure, or a joint approbation of that meaſure. In this ſenſe of the word, a law is made by the conſent of thoſe only who voted for it. It may happen then, in the houſe of commons, when the houſe is thin, and a law paſſes by a ſmall majority, that the *actual conſenters* to the ſtatute may be leſs than the *twentieth* part of the repreſentatives of the people*. But to this I am quickly anſwered,

* The houſe of commons conſiſts of 558 members. Of theſe, in all caſes, except that of diſputed elections, in

ed, that 'There is comprehended under 'the term, not only an *actual* and *explicit*, 'but a *virtual* and *implicit* conſent. Now 'the minority of the members preſent, 'with all the abſent, are conceived as vir-'tually and implicitly conſenting to the 'deed of the majority of the members pre-'ſent.' Here then is an acceptation of the term obtruded upon us, ere we are aware, ſo very different from the former and ordinary acceptation, as to be in effect the reverſe. Your *virtual and implicit conſent* to a meaſure, may compriſe, in ſome inſtances, what I ſhould call an *actual and explicit diſſent* from it, a diſapprobation, or perhaps a declared abhorrence of it. Of this kind are many of the *virtual and implicit conſents* given in both houſes of parliament. The virtual conſent of the electors, thoſe againſt, as well as thoſe for, each ſucceſsful candidate, to all that ſhall be enacted in parliament, either with, or againſt, the approbation

in which they act in a juridical, not in a legiſlative capacity, 40 make a houſe, whereof 21 the majority is not the 26th part of the whole number.

tion of their member, is liable, if poſſible, ſtill more glaringly, to the ſame objections. Could a man be ſaid to ſpeak Engliſh, at leaſt could he be ſaid to ſpeak truth, who ſhould affirm that the city-members and the members for Middleſex *conſented* to the act for ſhutting up the port of Boſton, the act for reſtraining the trade of the colonies to Great Britain and Ireland, and the Quebec act? If he could affirm this with truth and propriety, one cannot help concluding that it is ſhameleſs in any of thoſe gentlemen to raiſe ſo much clamour againſt acts to which they have given their *conſent*. And if he could not affirm it, without expoſing himſelf to be charged with telling an untruth, to what purpoſe is it to employ, in the very maxims on which ye found, terms in ſo vague and ſo eluſive a manner, that, on ſome occaſions, their meaning is in effect the contrary of that which ye give them on other occaſions, and of that which they uniformly bear in common language? I know no purpoſe but one it can anſwer, a purpoſe it has often anſwered,

ed, a purpoſe it ſtill but too well anſwers —to darken, to perplex, and to miſlead.

When theſe people are puſhed for an explanation, their *virtual* and *implied conſent* dwindles to no more at laſt, than that by our conſtitution the minority are ſo far determined by the act of the majority, and thoſe who have no voice in the election, as well as the electors, by the majority of the elected preſent at the paſſing of any act, as to be obliged to *ſubmit* to it as the law of the land. This indeed is a language which I underſtand, but ye muſt obſerve, that, in this ſenſe, it may with equal truth be affirmed, that, in the ariſtocratical ſtate of Venice, the people are bound by no laws but thoſe to which they have given their *conſent;* becauſe, by their conſtitution, the plebeians are determined by the deed of the patricians, and are therefore to be underſtood as *virtual* and *implicit* conſenters. Nay, ye may extend the maxim to the inhabitants of Turkey, who, by the conſtitution of their country, may with equal propriety

propriety be conſidered as *conſenting* to the declared will of the Grand Signior. The will of a majority from which I differ, is no more *my* will; their opinion which I diſbelieve, is no more *my* opinion, than if they were the will and opinion of a ſingle perſon only. In this reſpect number makes no odds. And I can never, without a perverſion of ſpeech, be ſaid to be *ſelf governed*, if my conduct muſt be regulated by the will and opinion of others, and not by my own.

The ſource of all the blundering, ſo frequent on this ſubject, is the crude and contradictory conceit that government can be rendered compatible with perfect freedom. Nothing can be clearer than that the only man perfectly free, or ſelf-directed, whoſe will is in every thing his law, is *the ſavage*, a being that is independent of every body. The very baſis of political union is a partial ſacrifice of liberty for *protection*. The ſavage, who firſt enters into this ſtate, muſt be ſenſible that he impairs his freedom, to

increaſe

increaſe his ſecurity. He is willing to be, to a certain degree, dependent, and conſequently leſs his own maſter, that thereby he may enſure his life, his property, and even the exerciſe of his freedom, ſo far as it remains unaffected by the laws of the community. This holds, though in different degrees, whatever be the form of government adopted, be it of *one*, of *a few*, or of *the many*. In each it is equally eſſential, that the will of the individual be controuled, (and what is this but the abridgement of his liberty?) in the firſt by the will of the *prince*, in the ſecond by that of the *nobles*, in the third by that of the *people**.

'Is

* There is a ſtrange inaccuracy in the manner of talking ſome have uſed on this ſubject. 'The ſtate,' ſay they, 'which is governed by its own will, that is, 'by the will of the majority of its members, is the on-'ly ſtate that can be called *free*, being under ſelf-go-'vernment, and ſo its own legiſlator.' Be it ſo. But when, ere we are aware, ye ſlide in as identical, 'Every 'man in ſuch a ſtate is ſelf-governed and his own le-'giſlator;' ye obtrude upon us a propoſition which, ſo far from coinciding, is inconſiſtent with the former.

The

'Is there then no difference between one 'government and another, between what 'is

The individual in ſuch a community is, in every thing wherein the community interpoſes, governed not by his own will, but by theirs, by the will of the majority of his fellow-citizens, though diametrically oppoſite to that which his reaſon approves, and to which his diſpoſition inclines him. 'But he has a vote in public 'meaſures, and if he be of the majority, there is a co-'incidence of his will with that of the ſtate.' Undoubtedly. But then, if he be of the minority, is not his will in oppoſition to that of the ſtate! Yet, in contradiction to his own, he muſt conform to the will of the ſtate, conſequently is not ſelf-governed, conſequently, by your own explanations, is no *freeman*, but the ſlave of the ſtate. The ſtate is *free*, but he is a *ſlave*. Occaſional coincidences do not alter the caſe. The will of the deſpot may, in ſeveral inſtances, be coincident with that of his ſlave. The latter is not the leſs a ſlave in obeying him, though his yoke be the eaſier; for the concurrence is accidental. Ye inſiſt that, 'By enter-'ing into ſuch a polity,' a man conſents once for all to 'be governed by the will of the majority. The will of 'the majority therefore is properly thenceforth conſi-'dered as *his*. If ſo, he is ſtill free, and his own legiſ-'lator, even when acting in oppoſition to his judgment 'and choice.' Do ye not perceive, that this reply, if it have any weight, affects only the founders of the republic,

'is thought the moſt deſpotic, and the 'freeſt?' There are many differences, but they

public, who enter perſonally into ſuch engagements? But in fact it is a palpable ſophiſm. A man is only ſo far free, as his actions are directed by what *is* his will, not by what *was* his will, by his *particular opinion* of the known caſe, not by a *general acquieſcence* in he knew not what. By ſuch an *acquieſcence*, on the contrary, every body allows, that he *binds* himſelf. Now as far as he is *bound*, he is no longer *free*. A poor man, in the time of famine, barters his liberty for bread, engaging his ſervice for life to his rich neighbour. Such things have often happened. Now if one of our modern political philoſophers, ſeeing this man afterwards groaning under the drudgery and intolerable hardſhips of his condition, ſhould, to comfort him, tell him in the pompous language of his party, that he is as free as his maſter, that he is ſelf-governed, ſelf-directed, and his own legiſlator; becauſe the will to which he conſented to ſubject himſelf, ought from that moment to be conſidered as *his own*; who, I pray, would not accuſe a comforter of this ſtamp, of inſulting the wretches miſery with the moſt inhuman mockery?

Once more, in your paragon of republics, every *man* of whatever quality, character, ſtation, or circumſtances, has an equal ſhare in governing; becauſe to exclude any *man* from this honour, which ye deem his birth-

they reſult from principles totally diſtinct from thoſe in which ſome modern political ſchemers

birth-right, and to enſlave him, ye affirm are the ſame. It has been aſked (but I have not yet heard of any anſwer) why not every *woman* and every *child?* How unworthily ſoever theſe are treated in other polities, we ſhould not imagine that in your perfect model, where we are made to expect the very elixir of freedom, the greater part of the ſpecies would be left in abſolute thraldom. Is it the doctrine of theſe patrons of the natural rights of humanity, that *woman* is, and ought to be, doomed the irredeemable captive and *drudge* of that *lordly* creature, MAN? Is this her deſtiny even with the friends of freedom? There can be no doubt of it: For, if they will give her no ſuffrage in national councils, no voice in legiſlation, ſhe is not governed by her own will, is not her own legiſlatrix, and therefore, by their fundamental axioms, has no liberty, but is the hopeleſs ſlave of thoſe whoſe will ſhe receives for law. I cannot help thinking this excluſion the more inexcuſable, that their enlarged plan which admits all men without diſtinction of rank, education, or circumſtances, could have ſuſtained no conceivable injury, had they overlooked alſo the diſtinctions of age and ſex. This would, without endangering their ſcheme in the leaſt, have added to it more *liberality* as well as *uniformity*. Indeed to add to its abſurdity and confuſion, will be admitted by every cool and impartial inquirer, to be beyond the compaſs of poſſibility.

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they reſult from principles totally diſtinct from thoſe in which ſome modern political ſchemers

birth-right, and to enſlave him, ye affirm are the ſame. It has been aſked (but I have not yet heard of any anſwer) why not every *woman* and every *child?* How unworthily ſoever theſe are treated in other polities, we ſhould not imagine that in your perfect model, where we are made to expect the very elixir of freedom, the greater part of the ſpecies would be left in abſolute thraldom. Is it the doctrine of theſe patrons of the natural rights of humanity, that *woman* is, and ought to be, doomed the irredeemable captive and *drudge* of that *lordly* creature, MAN? Is this her deſtiny even with the friends of freedom? There can be no doubt of it: For, if they will give her no ſuffrage in national councils, no voice in legiſlation, ſhe is not governed by her own will, is not her own legiſlatrix, and therefore, by their fundamental axioms, has no liberty, but is the hopeleſs ſlave of thoſe whoſe will ſhe receives for law. I cannot help thinking this excluſion the more inexcuſable, that their enlarged plan which admits all men without diſtinction of rank, education, or circumſtances, could have ſuſtained no conceivable injury, had they overlooked alſo the diſtinctions of age and ſex. This would, without endangering their ſcheme in the leaſt, have added to it more *liberality* as well as *uniformity*. Indeed to add to its abſurdity and confuſion, will be admitted by every cool and impartial inquirer, to be beyond the compaſs of poſſibility.

ſchemers affect to place them. One momentous difference is, when, by the conſtitution, the authority of *the laws* is paramount to that of any *perſons*, however eminent in ſtation. In this caſe the people are governed by eſtabliſhed rules, which they know, or may know, if they will, and are not liable to be puniſhed by their ſuperiors, unleſs they tranſgreſs thoſe rules. Such are properly under a *legal government*. When the reverſe obtains, and men are liable to be haraſſed at the pleaſure of their ſuperiors, though guilty of no tranſgreſſion of a known rule, they are under *arbitrary power*. Again, the government is not only denominated *legal* but *free*, where, from its ſtructure, there ariſes the higheſt probability, that the laws ſhall be both equitable, and adapted to public utility. When poſitive ſtatutes coincide with the natural ſentiments of right and ideas of fitneſs, our minds ſo entirely approve them, that we do not conſider them as *reſtraints*, additional to thoſe to which our mental powers have ſubjected us. But when betwixt theſe,

inſtead

inſtead of coincidence, there is contrariety, the condition of the people is unnatural, and ſo far ſlaviſh as the laws prove a galling yoke, to which nothing but terror can ſecure obedience. In this reſpect the odds in forms of government is very great.

In regard to our own, *That* one of the eſſential branches of the legiſlature is elective, *that* its members muſt be men of ſuch rank and fortune as give them a perſonal intereſt in preſerving the conſtitution, and promoting the public good, *that* they are elected from all the different counties and boroughs in the iſland, by thoſe who have a principal concern both in agriculture and in trade, *that* they are but temporary legiſlators, and may ſoon be changed; *that* the laws they make for others muſt affect themſelves; *theſe* are the great bulwarks of BRITISH FREEDOM, as they afford the ſupreme council of the nation, the beſt opportunities of knowing, and the ſtrongeſt motives for enacting, what is moſt beneficial, not to *one* part of the country, or to

one claſs of the inhabitants, but to *the whole*. And if ſo, the people will very rarely be laid under *hurtful*, and not often under *unreaſonable*, that is unneceſſary, *reſtraints*. The more this is the caſe with a people, the more they enjoy of *civil liberty*, and the freer is their government.

Another important difference in political models, in reſpect of freedom, is, when the legiſlature is ſo conſtituted, as to ſecure alike againſt the tyranny of the *great*, and the madneſs of the *multitude*. The firſt of theſe is an invariable effect, in ſome degree, of abſolute monarchy, and in the higheſt degree of unlimited ariſtocracy, where the power is lodged in an hereditary nobility. The ſecond is as invariably the conſequence of pure democracy. The populace in every nation are, and muſt be, from the laborious and circumſcribed way of life, to which neceſſity ſubjects them for ſubſiſtence, ignorant and credulous, an eaſy prey to ambitious, worthleſs, and deſigning men. And fatal experience evinces, that none can be more

more unjuſt and cruel, or more blind and precipitate, than an incenſed rabble. 'Never 'is human nature ſo debaſed,' ſays a celebrated foreigner, 'as when ignorance is 'armed with power*.' The guard there is in the *Britiſh Conſtitution*, againſt both extremes, is juſtly accounted its principal excellence. The only other difference I ſhall mention, is the ſecurity there is under ſome civil eſtabliſhments, of *impartial judgment* to litigants, and a *fair trial* to thoſe accuſed of crimes. Thereby the people are defended againſt encroachment and oppreſſion both from neighbours and from rulers. Theſe are the principal diſtinctions between *legal* and *arbitrary*, *free* and *ſlaviſh*, as applied to governments. Theſe are in like manner real and weighty diſtinctions, very unlike the illuſive dreams of our political caſtle-builders.

But if any where the idea of ſuch a democracy, wherein every member is his own

* Voltaire, Hiſt. Gen. Chap. 118.

lawgiver, is realized, it is, as has been juſtly obſerved by ſome writers, in the diets and dietines of Poland; for, in the eſtabliſhed *anarchy* of that country, every member, that is, every nobleman, for the commons are no better than ſlaves, has it in his power to ſtop the proceedings of the whole. The *real*, not the *nominal*, conſent of every individual is there literally neceſſary. The conſequence is, that nowhere, under ſophi, mogul, or ſultan, is there leſs order, leſs liberty, leſs ſecurity than there. Every man is at the mercy of every man. Every man has it in his power to do much and public miſchief, not one to do any public and ſubſtantial good. Is then this chaotic jumble, for I can call it neither government nor conſtitution, the great idol of our modern republicans? I cannot allow myſelf to think ſo. But I am certain of one thing, that it is the only model which their fantaſtic maxims ſerve in any degree to juſtify.

I do not ſay that that model, bad as it is, is an exact repreſentation of the modern political monſter *ſelf-legiſlation*, that it equals the extravagance implied in the definition given of a free or legal government, the only government wherein the people are under an obligation in conſcience to obey the magiſtrate. 'It is,' ſay they, 'a ſtate 'wherein every man is governed by laws 'of his own making.' Theſe are indeed fine words, and an admirable topic they furniſh to popular declaimers. But if ye do not chooſe to be faſcinated by unmeaning phraſes, ye need only reflect, and the charm diſſolves of itſelf. Who is ſo ignorant as to need to be told, that the ſyſtem of laws in every civilized nation, the *freeſt*, if ye will, in the univerſe, is the work of ages, and that no perſons living can, in any ſenſe, be ſaid to be makers of them? Our *conſent* could have not been aſked to the making of laws, before we had an exiſtence; and it is no otherwiſe that we give it to them now, than as we give it to the laws of the univerſe, in accommodating

ourſelves to them the beſt way we can. Nay, there are many of them which, though we ſubmit to them, we may diſapprove, and would alter, if we could. To ſay they are the work of our anceſtors, is nothing to the purpoſe. We are as diſtinct perſons from them, as from the people of France or of Egypt, and our inclinations and ſentiments may be as different from theirs, as from thoſe of any other nation whatever. And though it be true, that the preſent generation has ſome ſhare in the buſineſs of law-making, as well as former generations, it is equally true, that, in a ſtate conſiderably advanced in civilization, all the laws that can be made in the time of any one ſet of legiſlators, will ſcarcely be found to exceed the ten thouſandth part of the whole code.

But if, by all this parade of big words, no more is meant than the *acquieſcence*, which, from a principle both of public utility and of private, we give to the laws of our country, it might with equal truth be affirmed, that

that the laws of nature, whereby the heats in ſummer, and the ſtorms in winter, and the more temperate weather in ſpring and autumn, are conducted, are of *our making*, becauſe we find it both our duty and our intereſt to acquieſce in them. Once more, if all thoſe glorious privileges ſo pompouſly diſplayed, ſink, on the ſcrutiny, into a mere paſſive ſubmiſſion and *acquieſcence*, and if this be the true baſis of civil liberty, the inhabitants of Perſia or of Japan, have more freedom than we Britons, as *their* acquieſcence will be found much perfecter than *ours*. The leſs power the people have in matters of legiſlation and government, the more theſe matters will be conſidered by them as on a footing with the laws of the univerſe, and beyond their reach. On the contrary, the greater power they have, the more they will be accuſtomed to ſcrutinize public meaſures, and the more they will find themſelves diſpoſed to grumble.

I have already obſerved, that with thoſe reaſoners, whoſe ſentiments on this ſubject

I have been examining, no form of government, wherein their radical maxims have no place, can be called *juſt* or *legitimate*, or can lay a moral obligation on the people to obedience. 'Every other form,' ſay they, as 'it is founded in violence of one kind or 'other, ſo, when a proper opportunity of-'fers, may juſtly be overturned by vio-'lence, nay, ought to be overturned, that 'room may be made for a free and right-'ful government, the only one that binds 'the conſcience.' I ſhould think that the bare mention of conſequences ſo baneful to ſociety, logically deducible from a ſet of principles, would ſtartle the benevolent and judicious, and make them cooly re-examine the principles which lead to ſuch concluſions, by whatever reſpectable names they come recommended. I know that ſome ſuch paradoxes, as I have been combating, have been adopted, or rather haſtily thrown out in the heat of diſputation, and party-conflicts unfriendly to the diſcovery of truth, by writers whoſe fame, in other reſpects deſervedly great, has drawn a venera-

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tion even for their *crudities*. But let us not be ſo much dazzled by any name, how illuſtrious ſoever, as to ſacrifice to it the rights of truth and juſtice.

Conſider, I pray you, is it credible, that in at leaſt nineteen nations out of twenty now exiſting in the world (I admit, for argument's ſake, that there are ſome which come within their deſcription) the people are under no obligation to obey the ruling powers? Is there no right but that of the ſtronger ſubſiſting among them? How does this doctrine quadrate with that of the New Teſtament? I hope I ſpeak to the diſciples of Chriſt, to thoſe who believe the ſcriptures to be a revelation from God. If ſo, I perſuade myſelf, my hearers will not be raſh in admitting any theory which will not bear the teſt of Holy Writ. We have already tried thoſe novel maxims of our modern republicans by the light of REASON; let us bring them alſo to the Chriſtian touchſtone, the BIBLE. This is a field on which, as far as I have obſerved, the

the combatants have not yet entered. But ſurely, if we have not renounced the faith of Jeſus, it is of the utmoſt conſequence to us to know, how far any principles, however artfully inculcated, are conformable to the heavenly leſſons tranſmitted from our Divine Maſter. Hear his faithful ſervant Paul, *Let every ſoul be ſubject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God. And they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation* *. Can any thing be more explicit? By the moſt moderate interpretation this threatening muſt denote divine puniſhment either here or hereafter. No limitation is annexed, from which we can learn that the precept was meant to extend to the ſubjects of only one ſpecies of civil polity. Magiſtrates, on the contrary, are here denoted by terms of the moſt extenſive ſignification, that we may know that the intention was to comprehend thoſe under every conſtitution,

* Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

ſtitution. They are *the higher*, or the ruling *powers*, and *the powers that be*, thoſe under the conduct of providence ſettled among you, democratical or monarchical, hereditary or elective. And if we inquire, What were the powers actually in being at the time, to which the people were commanded to be ſubject? The anſwer is plain. They were the powers of the Roman government, not of the commonwealth, but of the empire, a new ſpecies of military monarchy, elective indeed, but not by the people either collectively or repreſentatively, irregular, arbitrary, and ſuch as ſuited not in any reſpect what modern theoriſts call *a juſt and legitimate government.*

In regard to tribute, the point ſo hotly agitated with us at preſent, nothing can be more expreſs. *Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour* *. What ſhall we ſay to this paſſage, if all cuſtom and tribute are naturally

* Rom. xiii. 7.

rally and eſſentially, *free gifts* on the part of the people, and if conſequently no tribute or cuſtom could be due to any man to whom they had not previouſly, either perſonally, or by their repreſentatives, freely given and granted it? But with this doctrine, it ſeems the apoſtle was utterly unacquainted.

The Jews indeed had a ſyſtem of their own with regard to taxing, quite different from the American ſyſtem, (of which they certainly had no conception) but plainly pointing to the ſame object, an *exemption*. Their doctrine was, that 'God's elect 'people, the holy nation, the deſcendants 'of the patriarchs, were not taxable by ido-'laters ſuch as the Romans, uncircumciſed 'and profane.' This was the grand topic of declamation of *their* patriots; for *they* too had their patriots. Their objection, as it had ſome colour from the Old Teſtament, could not fail to appear plauſible to a people with whoſe prejudices, pride, and ſelfiſhneſs it perfectly coincided. But did our Saviour,

Saviour, when conſulted by them, give his ſanction to their ſentiments? Did he by his anſwer court popularity, and the fame of *patriotiſm?* I uſe the term in its modern degradation. Quite the reverſe. Though, by his manner of anſwering, he eluded the malice his enemies ſhowed in putting the queſtion, nothing can be more deciſive than his reply. After aſking them to ſhow him the tribute money, and being told that it bore Cæſar's image and ſuperſcription, he immediately rejoined, *Render therefore to Ceſar the things which are Ceſar's, and to God the things which are God's* *, plainly intimating, that as they derived the advantages of protection and civil order from the Roman government, of which the currency of its coin was an evidence, they ought not to refuſe contributing to its ſupport. Yet it is certain, that to any tax exacted by the Romans, the conſent of no Jew was ever aſked. Is it ſo then, that this original, this unalienable, this indefeaſible right, to which, in the turgid dialect of America, *the laws of*

* Mat. xxii. 21.

of nature and of nature's God entitle every man, that no part of his property can be alienated without his consent, was totally unknown to our Lord and his Apostles * ? Did

* It is indeed scarcely credible that any who entail slavery on their fellow-creatures, whom they buy and sell like cattle in the market (and some such, it is said, are in the *congress*) should have the absurd effrontery to adopt this language. If they really believe their own doctrine, what opinion must they entertain of themselves, who can haughtily trample on what they acknowledge to be the unalienable rights of mankind? Will they dare to elude this charge, by declaring that they do not consider *negroes* and *Indians* as of the human species? That they account them beasts, or rather worse, one would naturally infer from the treatment they too commonly give them. But I have not yet heard, that they openly profess this opinion. How well does their conduct verify what has been remarked with great justice of all those republican levellers, who raise a clamour about *the natural equality of men*, and *their indefeasible rights*; that they mean only to level all distinctions above them, and pull down their superiors, at the same time that they tyrannize over their inferiors, and widen, as much as possible, the distance between themselves and those below them. Indeed this character, if I understand him right, is given to the southern provinces, particularly

Did *they* not diſcover what is clear as demonſtration to all our *weſtern brethren*, that without ſuch conſent, by whatever law or ſtatute the tax was impoſed, it could be no better than *ſtatutable plunder* * ? Or knowing it, did they diſſemble the matter, take the aid of equivocation, that they might conceal it from the people, and court the favour of the great? Will any Chriſtian affirm this; and not rather, that, if they had known of ſuch a right, they would have furniſhed

particularly Virginia and the Carolinas by their celebrated patron Mr Burke. [See his ſpeech, March 1775.] Nay, *the haughtineſs of domination*, as he expreſſes it, exerciſed over the wretches in their power, is by the MAGIC of his eloquence, converted into an argument with their ſuperiors, the Britiſh legiſlature, to treat theſe petty tyrants with greater lenity than would be proper towards perſons more humble and humane. An ordinary genius would have deduced the oppoſite concluſion; for if any people deſerve to *have judgment without mercy*, it is they *who ſhow no mercy*. I do not ſay, however, that this ought to be our rule of dealing with them. 'Let mercy, though unmerited, ſtill triumph 'over judgment.'

* A favourite phraſe of the Congreſs.

furniſhed their countrymen with this additional argument in ſupport of their plea; inſtructing them better in the prerogatives of the ſpecies, which were not the leſs theirs, becauſe they were ſo ſtupid as not to find them out?

Further, did the firſt publiſhers of the goſpel never reflect that Judea was one country and Italy another, that the Jews and the Romans were two very diſtant peoples, different in origin, manners, laws, and language, and of religions oppoſite in every article and incompatible? The argument would have been incomparably ſtronger in their caſe than it is in our preſent conteſt, which admits only the plea of diſtance.

Has Paul in particular acted the politician in this affair? Has he ſhrewdly given an ambiguous order to pay tribute to whom tribute is due, that, on the one hand, he might appear a dutiful ſubject to the Pagan magiſtrate, and, on the other, might ſuggeſt

to

to Chriſtians an excellent pretence for eluding the obligation, by maintaining that there is none to whom tribute is due? Far be ſuch vile artifices, the diſgrace even of Jeſuits, from the ſelect miſſionaries of THE TRUE AND FAITHFUL WITNESS. Far be ſuch execrable caſuiſtry from being charged on the *word* of GOD, the ORACLE of *truth*. Indeed if the whole paſſage is attended to, we ſhall find that the apoſtle has left no ſcope for this poor ſubterfuge. *For this cauſe*, ſays he, *pay ye tribute alſo, for they are God's miniſters attending continually on this very thing*. He does not heſitate to aſcribe to them a divine commiſſion, in the character even of *taxers*. Now nothing is more certain than that in the Roman empire in thoſe days, the people, throughout the provinces, were aſſeſſed either by the imperial authority, or by the ſenate; and had no ſhare, either perſonally, or by repreſentatives, in aſſeſſing themſelves. For the ſenate was not choſen by the people. I intreat you, my brethren, for the ſake of *truth*, for the ſake of *that wor-*

thy name by which ye are called, for the ſake of *your own ſouls*, and thoſe of *your fellow-chriſtians*, to compare impartially the language of our Lord and his apoſtles with that of our modern demagogues: and from the difference ye find in them, judge of the different ſpirit which they breathe. Not a ſingle hint do we get from thoſe, that 'taxation and repreſentation are inſe-'parable;' no ſuggeſtion that for 'Chriſ-'tians tamely to ſubmit in an article of this 'nature would be to ſacrifice their liberties, 'to be loſt to every ſenſe of virtue, to ſell 'themſelves and their poſterity to perpe-'tual ſervitude.' Let thoſe do it who can; I own it is impoſſible for me to reconcile this language with that of the goſpel *.

So

* Nothing has aſtoniſhed me more in the courſe of this controverſy, than to obſerve that ſome learned men on the oppoſite ſide ſhould imagine, that they can conciliate their favourite maxims with the precepts of the goſpel. One in particular, of whoſe abilities and piety I have a very great opinion, and to whoſe ſentiments I have

So ſtrong did the argument from the words of Paul appear againſt the papal uſurpations

have in this diſcourſe frequently alluded, has (I am convinced very ſincerely) beſtowed the higheſt encomiums on Chriſtianity as the perfection of religion and of reaſon. But truth compels me to remark, that, if the principles of his party be well-founded, thoſe encomiums are exceedingly miſplaced; their ſyſtem not having a greater enemy on earth than the goſpel. Once admit their notions of the *only juſt and legitimate government;* and ye transform the publiſhers of our religion into preachers of ſlavery, both internal and external. To inculcate on the Romans obedience to rulers on whom they had no check, and ſubmiſſion to edicts in the framing of which they had no ſhare, directly or indirectly; what was it, on the ſyſtem of our American advocates, if it was not preaching up *internal ſlavery* which ſubjects the community to the will of a part? And in regard to other nations as Jews and Greeks, to command them to obey the emperor, and magiſtrates deputed by him; what was it, leſs than preaching up *external ſlavery* which ſubjects nations to a diſtant and foreign power? As to this ſort, we are not left to infer it. We are told plainly, 'Such was the ſlavery of the provinces ſubject 'to ancient Rome.' How unreaſonable and injurious then was it to be an advocate for ſuch a power, to attempt to reconcile men to it, by maintaining that reſiſtance will expoſe them to divine vengeance? Yet on

uſurpations on the ſecular powers; for if every ſoul muſt be ſubject to them, (and it was

the principles of our adverſaries, thus unreaſonable and thus injurious (there is no diſſembling it) were Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles Peter and Paul. Jeſus Chriſt to his countrymen in Judea, Peter to the Jews in diſperſion, and Paul to the Cretans, on whom he ſtrictly enjoined Titus to inculcate thoſe enſlaving doctrines. And if to make no difference in enforcing obedience on thoſe *within*, and thoſe *without*, that community which might be ſtrictly denominated ROMAN; if, without ſuggeſting any diſtinction, to employ the ſame ſanctions, the divine favour and the divine diſpleaſure, with them both, be to maintain, that reſiſtance is *no leſs criminal* in the one caſe than in the other; and if to maintain this, be, as has been affirmed, to *inſult* thoſe to whom this language is addreſſed, I do not ſee in what manner our antagoniſts will clear our Lord and his Apoſtles from this ugly imputation——'But has nothing been 'alleged from ſcripture on the other ſide?' It is true that, a few paſſages which, as appears from the expreſſions employed and from the context, relate ſolely to the ſpiritual kingdom of the Meſſiah, and the means whereby it ought to be promoted and ſupported, have moſt unnaturally been forced into the ſervice of political projectors. Yet nothing can be clearer, than that the intention of thoſe places, ſo far from being to preſcribe a model to worldly polities, was to contradiſtinguiſh the

church,

was to the Romans the words were addreſſed) the biſhop or pope can plead no exemption, (ſo ſtrong, I ſay, did this argument appear

church, a heavenly polity, to all of them. They do not therefore invalidate the methods proper to be uſed in theſe; but expreſsly prohibit the Chriſtian paſtors from admitting thoſe methods into the ſervice of religion. However much therefore thoſe inſtructions may militate againſt the erection of a ſpiritual tyranny, or *Hierarchy* like the Romiſh, they nowiſe affect the ſecular power. This, with its various arrangements and offices, though of a different nature, operating by different means, and to a different end, ſo far from being ſuperſeded by the other, is declared alſo to be *the ordinance of God*, and neceſſary to human ſociety in its preſent corrupt ſtate. It happens unluckily for our opponents, that as monarchy was the eſtabliſhed power in the time of our Lord and his apoſtles, when theſe in their injunctions, deſcend to particulars, they always ſpecify the ſubordinations of kingly government. In ſhort, the argument from ſcripture, in every view I take of it, appears ſo full, ſo explicit, ſo deciſive, that I could undertake to demonſtrate that the diſſolute and execrable leſſons of a late father to his ſon, on the ſubject of *adultery* and *diſſimulation*, are not more irreconcilable to the pure morals of chriſtianity, than the libertine and hardly leſs pernicious maxims, though ſuſceptible of a more ſpecious colouring, of ſome democratical declaimers.

appear) that ſome of the canoniſts could conceive no way of eluding it, but by maintaining that all ſuch injunctions are merely *prudential advices;* that as the Chriſtians were then the weaker party, who, if they had not paid willingly, would have been compelled, and might have ſuffered in other reſpects, the Apoſtle thought it adviſable for them to comply, ſince they could not make their condition better by a refuſal. Thoſe precepts then are to be viewed in the ſame light as we ſhould view the counſel of a friend, who, when we were ſetting out on a journey, ſhould warn us, that if we meet with highwaymen on the road, we ought to give them our money rather than endanger our lives. A curious turn, I muſt acknowledge, to the dictates of inſpiration.

At the ſame time I do but juſtice to thoſe caſuiſts when I confeſs, that I have not heard any thing ſo ſpecious, for obviating ſo ſtrong an argument from Scripture, advanced by any of our champions on the ſide

ſide of the American revolt. For this reaſon I ſhall ſuppoſe that ſuch of them as think the doctrine of the Bible of any conſequence in the debate, ſatisfy their conſciences with the gloſs above mentioned. Be it then, that there is no right in any government not eſtabliſhed and upheld by univerſal conſent, but the freebooter's right, the right of the ſtronger: that there is no law in ſuch, but-club-law; that there is no motive to ſubmiſſion, but that which ought to influence us, in caſe we were encountered by pirates, robbers, or ruffians of whatever denomination; that there is no difference between theſe and civil rulers, but ſuch as obtains between leſs and greater villains, not a difference in kind, but in degree. On this hypotheſis, if the Apoſtle had been adviſing Chriſtians, as to the conduct they ſhould maintain in caſe of being attacked by robbers, his ſtyle and reaſoning ought to have been the ſame. But will any Chriſtian, will even a candid infidel, who has read the Apoſtle's writings, affirm that he would have uſed the ſame arguments?

Would

Would his reaſon for their compliance have been, 'that robbery is of *God?* that 'the highwayman is his *miniſter* for their 'good, expreſsly *commiſſioned* to rob on the 'highway; that reſiſting him is reſiſting '*God's ordinance*, and the ſure way of in-'curring the divine vengeance?' or, Could this have been called arguing on the merely prudential conſideration of not idly oppoſing a ſuperior force? Barely to unfold what is implied in ſome opinions is a ſufficient refutation. But what can more explicitly exclude this abſurd, not to ſay blaſphemous cavil, than what follows, *Be ye ſubject alſo not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake;* not only from fear of wrath, the puniſhment that may be inflicted by the offended magiſtrate, but (even if that could be eluded) act thus from a principle of duty towards God, who requires it of you.

A celebrated foreigner, a republican too of the new model, whoſe underſtanding, though very acute, has, in ſeveral inſtan-

ces,

ces, proved the dupe of a warm imagination and ſtrong paſſions, intoxicated with the chimerical maxims I have already conſidered, has, with infinite labour, chalked out the plan of a democracy perfectly Utopian, ſuch as never was, and never will be, brought into effect. This man, though a profeſſed admirer of the goſpel, and at times, he would make us think, a believer, had too much diſcernment not to diſcover, and too much candour not to acknowledge, that it is impoſſible to reconcile Chriſtianity with the idol of a republic which he had reared up. I am ſurpriſed that none of the *worſhippers* of this *IDOL*, in our iſland, ſeems to have attended to this remark *. As little have they attended to another of the ſame author, that it is only in a very ſmall city that his ſcheme is practicable †. I am not ſo much aſtoniſhed that they have not diſcovered, what to me is equally plain, that *common ſenſe* (with which I could never find

* Rouſſeau Du contrat ſocial, Liv. iv. chap. viii.

† Liv. iii. chap. xv

find the goſpel at variance in any thing) is not leſs its foe than Chriſtianity.

That our religion ſtrongly inculcates the duty of ſubjects to the magiſtrate (which this philoſopher calls being favourable to tyranny) is undeniable. It gives no preference to one form of government above another; it does not enter into the queſtion, but it is friendly to order and to the public peace, which it will not permit us raſhly to infringe; it teaches us to reſpect the diſpenſations of providence, and to ſeek the good of the ſociety whereof we are members. The ancient landmarks of the conſtitution it forbids us to remove, in the preſumptuous hope that we ſhall place them anew better than our fathers have done. Nay more, it unites in ſuch a manner our allegiance to the ſovereign and loyalty to the conſtitution of our country, with piety towards God, as ſhows that there is an intimate connection between theſe duties. *Fear the Lord and the king*, ſays Solomon, *and middle not with them that are given to change.*

change. To the ſame purpoſe Peter, *Fear God, honour the king**. And in the words I have often referred to from Paul, the duty is all along enforced from a principle of reverence to God. At the ſame time it does not preclude the conſtitutional ſupport of any civil right. Paul, though as ſenſible as any man of the ſhortneſs of life, and of the ſmallneſs of its value, compared with eternity, did not diſdain oftener than once to aſſert his right as a denizen of Rome, happily joining the ſpirit of the Roman with the moderation of the Chriſtian†. And, in the former part of this diſcourſe, I have ſhown, I hope, with ſufficient evidence, that none of the expreſſions, recommending the duty of allegiance, if candidly interpreted by the ſame rules which are admitted in interpreting other precepts ſimilarly expreſſed, can be underſtood to exclude an exception in caſes of extreme neceſſity. It was alſo obſerved, that in the general terms employed in Scripture,

* 1 Peter, ii. 17. † Acts, xvi. 37. xxii. 25.

Scripture, there is manifeſtly included the *whole* of the civil conſtitution. And the whole is more to be regarded than a *part*. Even the royal power, however conſiderable, is ſtill, in reſpect of the conſtitution, but a part.

In regard to the preſent quarrel, it may juſtly be ſaid that it is the *whole* that is attacked. Indeed the ringleaders of the American revolt, the members of their congreſs, have, in their laſt declaration, pointed all their malice againſt the King, as though, in conſequence of a ſettled plan, he had been adopting and purſuing tyrannical meaſures in order to render himſelf abſolute. They have accordingly ſpared no abuſe, no inſult, by which they could inflame the minds of an unhappy and deluded people. Their expreſſions are ſuch as decency forbids me to repeat. The *means* they employ are indeed of a colour with the *end* they purſue. But let thoſe who can lay claim to any impartiality or candour, but reflect, and ſay, in what ſingle inſtance

inſtance our benign *ſovereign* has adopted any meaſure, but by the advice of the Britiſh *legiſlature*, or purſued a ſeparate intereſt from that of the Britiſh *nation*. It is ſolely concerning the ſupremacy of the *Parliament*, the legiſlative body of Great Britain, and not concerning the prerogatives of the *crown*, that we are now contending. And ought not this circumſtance to enhance our obligation to concur with alacrity, as far as our influence will extend, in ſtrengthening the hands of the government, now laid under a neceſſity of ſeeking by arms, to bring back to their duty, thoſe inſolent and rebellious ſubjects?

I am unwilling to quit the argument, without taking notice of every plea that may ſeem to be of weight on the other ſide of the queſtion. Some of the more moderate advocates for theſe people will plead, that, without recurring to any democratical and newfangled principles, or to the footing on which the coloniſts themſelves, and ſome of their moſt ſanguine champions

champions in this country, think proper to place their defence, theſe few queſtions, for clearing the point, may pertinently be aſked. Firſt, 'Whether or not have the 'Britiſh Americans a civil and conſtitu-'tional right (let the terms *natural* and *un-'alienable*, with the other *nonſenſe* employ-'ed for taking in the rabble, be exploded) 'to all the privileges of Britiſh ſubjects?' Secondly, 'Is it not a diſtinguiſhing privi-'lege of Britiſh ſubjects, that they are not 'taxable but by their repreſentatives?' And, thirdly, 'If this be the caſe, can the 'Americans be regularly or juſtly taxed 'by a parliament in which they have no 'repreſentatives?'

In anſwer to the firſt queſtion, It is admitted they are entitled to all the privileges of Britiſh ſubjects. In anſwer to the ſecond, If the members of the Houſe of Commons are, as the objector ſurely means to ſignify, the repreſentatives only of thoſe by whom they are elected, it is not the privilege of all Britiſh ſubjects, that they are

are not taxable but by their repreſentatives. This is the privilege of thoſe only who are in a certain way qualified. It is not above one in twenty of the people of England, or above one in a hundred of the people of Scotland, who have a voice in the election of members of parliament. But if the members repreſent alſo thoſe who are not their electors, and have no power, no influence whatever, in electing them, it will be impoſſible to aſſign a good reaſon why they may not be denominated the repreſentatives of all the ſubjects in America, as well as in Britain. This leads directly to the anſwer to the third queſtion. If, as has been computed, there be at leaſt between ſix and ſeven millions of people in Great Britain, who are taxed by a parliament in which they are not repreſented, it can be deemed neither unreaſonable nor unconſtitutional, that there ſhould be about two millions in America in the ſame ſituation.

It would be uncandid not to admit that there is ſome difference in the caſes. The members of the Houſe of Commons, in almoſt every tax (for there are ſome exceptions *) they lay on their Britiſh fellow-ſubjects, tax themſelves in proportion. The caſe is different in regard to their fellow-ſubjects in America. But this is an inequality that neceſſarily reſults from the difference of ſituation; and is, beſides, more than counterbalanced by ſome motives and difficulties that will ever effectually prevent the legiſlature from going the ſame lengths in taxing the American ſubjects which it may ſafely go in taxing Britons.

But it is notorious, that the former have declared againſt every method that has yet been deviſed for removing this capital objection,

* The following, and perhaps ſome more, may be regarded as exceptions. The act eſtabliſhing the poſt-office; from this tax the privilege of franking exempts all members of parliament. The act impoſing a tax on ſeamen for the ſupport of Greenwich hoſpital. The act for laying an exciſe on ale and beer brewed for ſale.

jection, the only one of conſequence in the cauſe. The ſimpleſt method would doubtleſs be, to allow them a certain number of repreſentatives in the Houſe of Commons. Againſt this propoſal they have always loudly and vehemently exclaimed. Do they favour what has alſo been ſuggeſted in this controverſy, that a particular and moderate rate ſhould be fixed, according to which the ſubſidies levied from them ſhould uniformly bear a certain proportion to thoſe levied from Great Britain? To this they have given no better reception than to the other. Yet this would effectually remove the grand difficulty, that the parliament by loading the Americans would eaſe themſelves. In this caſe, on the contrary, no burden could be brought on them, but when a proportionably greater is laid on the Britiſh ſubject. Have they then propoſed any method themſelves for removing this obſtacle, this great ſtumbling-block? Nothing that I know of, but a total *immunity*, or what is equivalent, to be left to do

as they pleaſe. This and only this will content them.

Will any conſiderate perſon ſay, that this is a reaſonable motion on their part? Nothing can be leſs ſo. The colonies indeed, by their own provincial aſſemblies, have been in the practice of raiſing a ſmall part, and but a ſmall part, of what is neceſſary for the internal adminiſtration of juſtice and the government of the colony. But in this way they have not hitherto raiſed money for defraying the more public and unavoidable expences of the government in the protection of the whole. Nor indeed is this an adequate method of doing it, conſidering the independency of the provinces on one another, conſidering the difficulty of adjuſtment, when every one of ſo many is left entirely to itſelf, conſidering too the natural ſelfiſhneſs of men, which leads them to ſhift the burden, as much as poſſible, off themſelves, and throw it upon their neighbours. In the two laſt wars, which were entered into ſolely for the defence of the colonies,

colonies, and in conſequence of the clamour raiſed by them and their agents in this country, this nation was involved in more than ſeventy millions of debt. And of this enormous ſum they have not agreed, nor will agree, to any rule, by which a certain contingent, however low, may be aſcertained as what ought to be levied from them.

Shall I give you the ſum of all their propoſals to their Britiſh fellow-ſubjects, before they formally renounced their allegiance? I ſhall doubtleſs be accuſed of treating with ridicule a very ſerious buſineſs. But let it be obſerved, that when people are abſurd in their propoſitions and demands, the naked truth makes their conduct ridiculous. That it does ſo, can reflect only on themſelves; ſince to expoſe their abſurdity is the inevitable conſequence of a juſt repreſentation. I am not ſenſible that, in the following account, the real purport of their overtures and pretenſions are, in any reſpect, miſrepreſented, or even

heightened. What they claim, and what they offer, appear to amount to no more than this. 'We will do your king the 'honour to acknowledge him for our king; 'we will never refuſe to pay him that *com-* '*pliment*, provided no more than compli- 'ment is underſtood by it. Judicial pro- 'ceedings ſhall be in his name, and *his* '*name* (which will ſerve as well as any 'other name) ſhall ſtand at the head of 'our proclamations. Nay, he ſhall nomi- 'nate to certain offices among us, provid- 'ed it be in our power to feed or ſtarve 'the officers, or at leaſt to permit them to 'act, or tie up their hands, as we happen 'to like or diſlike their conduct. Though 'we are not ſatisfied with the reaſonable- 'neſs of the thing, we ſhall, for the pre- 'ſent, ſubmit to the reſtraints laid on 'our trade by the act of navigation, pro- 'vided we have none of your military to 'guard the execution of that act; and pro- 'vided further, that when any of our mer- 'chants are accuſed of ſmuggling, their 'cauſe be tried by a jury of *ſmugglers;*

'or

'or if any of our people be charged with 'ſedition and riot, they be tried by a jury 'of the *mob;* for this, we think, is in the 'true ſpirit of trial by jury, which is, that 'a man be tried by his *peers.* We do not 'mean, however, that this privilege ſhall 'extend in the ſame manner to your *cuſ-* 'tom-houſe officers, and other dependants 'of the crown, who, if they ſhould be 'ſent hither, and be accuſed of any crime, 'ſhall be tried by a jury too, not indeed 'of cuſtom-houſe officers, but of our *liber-* 'ty-men, that is our rioters and contraband 'traders, with their patrons and abettors.' And who can doubt that they are fit depoſitaries of the lives and properties of revenue-officers and ſoldiers? 'We will not be 'ſo diſreſpectful (however little we value 'it) as to decline participating in all the 'privileges of *Britiſh* ſubjects, inheritance, 'ſucceſſion, offices, honours and dignities 'amongſt you, equally with the *natives* of 'Great Britain. Further, we will allow 'your nation the honour not only of be-'ing at the principal charge in ſupporting

'the internal government of our provinces, 'but alſo of protecting us, at your own ex- 'pence, defenſively and offenſively, againſt 'all our enemies, real or imaginary, by ſea 'and land, whenever we ſhall think proper 'to raiſe a clamour; and we will in return 'agree to give you'—How much?—'Juſt '*whatever we pleaſe*, and, if we pleaſe, *no- 'thing at all.*' A moſt extraordinary co- venant, wherein all the obligations are on one ſide, and every thing is diſcretionary on the other.

Is this the manner in which individuals, or even private companies, contract with one another! Yet there are no doubt many individuals, and perhaps ſome pri- vate companies, in whom it might be ſafe to repoſe ſo implicit a confidence. But to recommend to the people of one nation to take this method in treating with thoſe of another, can ſcarcely be viewed otherwiſe than as an inſult to their underſtandings. I may add, that of all nations the laſt in whom we could with ſafety place ſo great a truſt

truſt is the North Americans, if the unamiable portrait, which I am ſtrongly inclined to think exaggerated, but which one of their warmeſt friends and ableſt advocates has drawn of them, is a juſt repreſentation of the original, and if they are ſuch *a proud, fierce, jealous, reſtive, untractable, ſuſpicious, litigious, chicaning race of pettifoggers*, as he ſeems to exhibit them *; and I may add, if they are as groſsly inſincere and falſe, as the conduct of their worthy repreſentatives, the *congreſs*, exhibits them to every one who will take the trouble to compare what they ſay of the article of religion in the Quebec act, in their Application to the people of Great Britain, with what they ſay of the ſame article, in their Addreſs to the people of Canada. Their duplicity in this particular, and in ſome others, has proved matter of confuſion to ſuch of their partiſans in this country, as have a regard to truth and candour †. Certain

* Mr Burke's Speech, March 22d 1775.

† In their application to the people of this iſland, they ſay, 'We think the legiſlature of Great Britain is 'not

tain it is, however, that their terms of reconciliation, if they can be called *terms*, where

'not authoriſed by the conſtitution, to eſtabliſh a religion 'fraught with ſanguinary and impious tenets.' Again, 'Nor can we ſuppreſs our aſtoniſhment, that a Britiſh 'Parliament ſhould ever conſent to eſtabliſh in that 'country [Canada] a religion that has deluged your 'iſland in blood, and diſperſed *impiety*, *bigotry*, *perſecution*, *murder*, and *rebellion*, through every part of the 'world.' REBELLION too in this black catalogue. O the ſanctimonious aſſurance of ſome men!

Quis tulerit GRACCHOS de *ſeditione* querentes?

In their Addreſs to the inhabitants of the province of Quebec, after enumerating the rights which they affirm the Canadians ought to poſſeſs, they add, 'And what 'is offered to you by the late act of parliament in their 'place? Liberty of conſcience in your religion? No: 'God gave it to you; and the temporal powers with 'which you have been, and are connected, firmly ſti-'pulated for your enjoyment of it. If laws divine and 'human could ſecure it againſt the deſpotic rapacity of 'wicked men, it was ſecured before;' that is, when the city and province were ſurrendered, on capitulation, to his Britannic Majeſty. Thus what, in the former Addreſs, we are told *the legiſlature of Great Britain is not authoriſed by the conſtitution to do*, we learn from the latter,

where all the conceſſions are exacted from one ſide, and nothing engaged for on the other,

ter, is no more than confirming a right to which the laws of God and the faith of contracts entitled that people; and which therefore it would have been both impious and treacherous in this nation to infringe. Nay, what is, if poſſible, more ſurpriſing, we learn hence that the Britiſh Parliament, inſtead of doing too much for the eſtabliſhment of the Romiſh religion in that region, has done too little. The congreſs is kind enough, therefore, to give them notice of this, and to warn them that by the *act*, all their rights, civil and religious, 'are 'ſubject to arbitrary alterations by the governour and 'council; and power is expreſsly reſerved, of appoint-'ing ſuch courts of criminal, civil, and eccleſiaſtical ju-'riſdiction as ſhall be thought proper.' They add, 'Such is the precarious tenure of *meer will* by which 'you hold your lives and RELIGION.' What a fine topic for declamation in abuſing the Britiſh legiſlature theſe orators would have had, if the Roman Catholic religion had not been eſtabliſhed in Canada! With what avidity would theſe zealous Proteſtants have laid hold on this circumſtance, with what triumph would they have expatiated on it, in order to inflame the minds of the Popiſh Canadians! As to that religion itſelf, which they had repreſented in their Application to the people of Britain as the moſt frightful monſter, it appears in their Addreſs to the inhabitants of the province of Que-

bec,

other, are, on every principle of common ſenſe, utterly unworthy of regard. Better far

bec, the moſt harmleſs thing in nature. 'We are too 'well acquainted,' mark the meanneſs of theſe flatterers, 'with the liberality of ſentiment diſtinguiſhing your 'nation, to imagine that difference of religion will pre-'judice you againſt a hearty amity with us. You 'know that the tranſcendent nature of freedom elevates 'thoſe who unite in the cauſe, above all ſuch low-'minded infirmities. The Swiſs cantons furniſh a me-'morable proof of this truth. Their union is compo-'ſed of Catholic and Proteſtant ſtates, living in the ut-'moſt concord and peace with one another; and there-'by enabled, ever ſince they bravely vindicated their 'freedom, to defy and defeat every tyrant that has in-'vaded them.' Really, Gentlemen, this is too much. For though ſuch profound politicians, engaged in ſuch immenſe undertakings, may find it quite neceſſary to diſpenſe with the rigid rules of *common honeſty*, it would be proper to do it more *covertly*. Some ſemblance of that antiquated and cumberſome virtue, has always hitherto been judged convenient, even for the greateſt Machiavels in politics. Your *barefaced* manner may create a ſuſpicion of a defect of another ſort, a defect of *common ſenſe*. And it is to be feared that this imputation will do you more hurt than the other.

far to let them have their beloved independence. I am not ſure that this would not have been the beſt meaſure from the beginning *. I ſay this, however, with all due ſubmiſſion and deference, for I am far from conſidering myſelf as a proper judge in ſo nice a queſtion.

WHAT then is the concluſion of the whole? It is preciſely that we follow the admonition

It would not, however, be equitable to form a judgement of the *people* from the conduct of theſe *truſtees*. When we conſider the turbulence of the times wherein the members of the Congreſs were elected, the factious ſpirit that had diffuſed itſelf, and the ſeditious projects that were hatching, we have reaſon to believe, that few men of candour and moderation, of equity and good ſenſe would ſtand forth candidates for the office. And if, by any chance, there were ſome ſuch among them, there is little ground to think, that, during the general ferment, they would be honoured with the popular ſuffrage. The wiſeſt and the beſt, we may juſtly conclude, have withdrawn from their elections altogether. And what the natural conſequence would be is very evident.

* Dr Tucker has advanced ſome very plauſible arguments in ſupport of this meaſure. See his Tracts.

admonition of the wiſe man, with which we began, that we *fear the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change.* Whilſt we ſincerely repent of the miſimprovement of former mercies, which have provoked heaven againſt us, let us act *as free, yet not uſing* our *liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs*, a practice too common in theſe days, *but as the ſervants of God;* entertaining a proper deteſtation of that modern political hypocriſy, which under the diſguiſe of *patriotiſm* (a name once reſpectable, now brought into diſgrace by frequent miſapplication) attempts to ſcreen the worſt deſigns and moſt pernicious practices. Let us often reflect that it is no new thing to find men who *promiſe liberty* to others, *while they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption* *. Such there were in the days of the Apoſtles. Of ſuch, Peter in particular warns Chriſtians to beware. The deſcription he gives of them bears too ſtriking a reſemblance, in many principal features, to the factious and diſaffected

* 2 Pet. ii. 19.

fected of our own time, not to deſerve our moſt ſerious attention. Like ſome of our American orators and popular tribunes, they delighted in a boaſtful, tumid, and bombaſtic diction. They ſpoke GREAT SWELLING *words of vanity* *. They *deſpiſed government*, were *preſumptuous, ſelf-willed, and not afraid to ſpeak evil of dignities* †.

In regard to the body of the people, our deluded fellow-ſubjects on the other ſide of the Atlantic, let us conſider them as objects of our pity more than of our indignation. In behalf of the mere populace, the unthinking multitude, it may with truth be pleaded almoſt in every inſurrection, that their ignorance is their apology. *They know not what they do.* They are but the tools of a few aſpiring, intereſted, and deſigning men, both on their ſide of the water, and on ours. Already, alas! they have ſeverely felt the effects of their folly. Let us ardently pray to the Father of lights and of

* 2 Pet. ii. 18. † —— 10.

of mercy, that he would open the *eyes* of the people, and turn the *hearts* of their leaders. Too long already have they been wandering in the dark, not knowing whither. Pretending to purſue liberty, they have turned their back upon it, they have fled from it. Seeking to avoid ſlavery, they have plunged headlong into it! May God who *ruleth the raging of the ſea*, and *ſtilleth the noiſe of the waves, ſtill the tumults of the people!* May he ſoon reſtore them to their ſenſes, for their ſakes and ours!

It is neither our duty nor our intereſt to wiſh them, or any part of the Britiſh dominions, in a ſtate of ſervitude, but we ought to wiſh and pray, that all our preſent differences may be compoſed in ſuch a manner, as, by providing againſt the like diſturbances in time to come, may effectually ſecure a laſting peace. This is not more for *our* benefit than it is for *theirs*. And indeed the intereſt of both, if rightly underſtood, will be found to be the ſame. The radical evil in their governments ſeems

to

to have been, even in the judgment of ſome of their friends *, that the conſtituent members of their ſtates were not equally balanced; the republican part was more than a counterpoize to both the reſt. This, to ſuperficial thinkers (who conceive democracy and freedom as ſynonymous) is regarded as ſo much gained to the ſide of liberty. There is not a more egregious error. The effect is indeed conſtantly an increaſe of licentiouſneſs; than which no kind of tyranny is a greater enemy to rational and civil liberty. If recourſe is had to matter of fact, I am perſuaded thoſe colonial governments will be found to have been the moſt turbulent, the moſt unhappy, the moſt licentious, I will add, the moſt intolerant, and ſuch as by conſequence gave the leaſt ſecurity to the liberty and property of individuals, wherein the exceſs of power on the democratical ſide has been the greateſt. May God, who bringeth light out of darkneſs, and order out of confuſion, make all our troubles terminate in what ſhall prove the felicity of all!

* See Mr Burke's Speech, March 1775.

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Containing a ſummary of all the particulars above treated.

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AN

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND,

UPON THE

ALARMS THAT HAVE BEEN RAISED

IN REGARD TO

POPERY.

1779.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. Jo. vii. 24.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author would not have been ſo late in giving his judgment to the public, on the alarm that has been raiſed about the danger of the Proteſtant religion, if the duties of his office had permitted him to do it ſooner. He cannot, however, conſider it as being yet too late. The national aſſembly of this church has not yet interpoſed.. It is not to be doubted that an application from them will be urged at their enſuing meeting. The Author is the more ſolicitous to give his ſentiments in this manner, as it will not be in his power to be preſent. And though he ſpoke his mind freely on the queſtion in the laſt Aſſembly, matters have proceeded ſo far ſince that time, that he could not excuſe himſelf,

ſelf, if he omitted to give this additional and more ample teſtimony to the world of his judgment on the whole of this important ſubject?

He hopes that what he here offers, will be attended to with coolneſs, and weighed with impartiality. He is influenced by no motive, but the love of truth and religion, and a deſire of promoting the honour of this church, and the peace of this country. Intelligent readers will not accuſe him of being too favourable to Popery. Such, he is afraid, if they ſuſpect him of partiality, will be inclined to think that it is all on the other ſide. Thus much he will acknowledge, that his abhorrence of the ſpirit of that illiberal ſuperſtition, heightens the diſlike he has to what bears ſo ſtriking a reſemblance to it in the ſpirit now raiſed in this country.

He has been induced the more readily

to

to take this method of delivering his ſentiments, becauſe he is certain he can in this way do greater juſtice to the argument, and with more effect, than by any aſſiſtance it would be in his power to give the cauſe in the Aſſembly-houſe. Whatever be the conſequence, he will at leaſt have the ſatisfaction to reflect that he has done his duty.

INTRODUCTION.

IN all the queſtions wherein religion and morality are concerned, it becomes Chriſtians, eſpecially Proteſtants, to recur, in the firſt place, to that which they all acknowledge *an infallible* ſtandard, and Proteſtants *the only infallible* ſtandard, of truth and right, THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. I know not any point of conduct, on which a Chriſtian, if he will impartially conſult them, may not find there the ampleſt information of his duty. The precepts and the example of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in particular, as well as the actions and the writings of his apoſtles, furniſh us with materials in abundance, both for forming our principles, and for directing our practice. In the preſent controverſy, may I be

allowed to aſk, Has that recourſe been had by the parties on either ſide, to this pure fountain of light, which might have been expected? It does not appear that there has. Let our firſt inquiry then be, What is the mind of the SPIRIT on this ſubject?

It has been pleaded, that the preſent diſpute, in regard to the repeal of certain penal ſtatutes againſt popery, though it be in part, is not wholly of the religious kind; it is in a great meaſure alſo a political queſtion. The ſafety of the conſtitution, it is ſaid, in church and ſtate, may be affected by the iſſue. This, in the ſecond place, will deſerve our ſerious conſideration, that we may diſcover not only what truth there is in it, and to what concluſion it would lead, but who the perſons are whom it ought chiefly to influence.

It may not prove unprofitable, in the third place, to inquire briefly what are thoſe

thoſe expedients which Chriſtians, and eſpecially paſtors, in a conſiſtency with both the ſpirit and the letter of the goſpel, are authoriſed to employ for repreſſing error and ſuperſtition, and promoting the belief and obedience of the truth?

Such a candid and impartial attention as the importance of the ſubject requires, to the following attempt at ſolving theſe queſtions, is earneſtly requeſted from every pious reader. The moſt zealous perſon, whatever ſide he has choſen, ought to reflect, that being a man he is fallible, and conſequently, that it is poſſible he may be miſtaken in his choice. We have the beſt authority to affirm, that a man may be *zealouſly* affected, yet not *well* affected *, may 'have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge †'. Hearken then to the apoſtle's admonition. 'Believe not

* Gal. iv. 17. † Rom. x. 2.

'every ſpirit', not even your own implicitly, for we often 'know not what manner of ſpirit' we 'are of; but try the 'ſpirits, whether they be of God, becauſe 'many falſe prophets are gone out into the 'world *. To the law and to the teſtimony, if they ſpeak not according to this 'word, it is becauſe there is no light in 'them †'.

* 1 John, iv. 1. † Iſaiah, viii. 20.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The Doctrine of the Goſpel in regard to Perſecution, particularly of Perſecutors.

THE name of perſecutor is juſtly become ſo odious, that I know no ſect of Chriſtians who do not diſclaim the character with abhorrence. Even papiſts will not confeſs that they perſecute. By their own account, they only adminiſter wholeſome ſeverities, for recovering thoſe who have ſwerved from the truth, or, if irreclaimable, for deterring others from following their pernicious courſes, for defending themſelves againſt their machinations, and for giving a timely check to the contagion of hereſy. Theſe, ſay they, are purpoſes the moſt ſalutary imaginable. They maintain further, that what is done in ſupport

of truth, however cruel it may appear, is not perſecution; that thoſe puniſhments only deſerve to be branded with that opprobrious appellation, which are employed in defence of error. But as they themſelves are always in the right, they can never be in hazard of inflicting theſe.

So ſays the Romaniſt, and, by ſaying ſo, demonſtrates, either that he is himſelf a perſecutor on principle, or elſe, that there is no ſuch thing as perſecution on the earth. For what is any man's immediate criterion of truth, but his own opinions, in which it is but too evident, that the moſt confident are not always the beſt founded. On this footing, the more opinionative a man is, (which is far from ſaying, the more wiſe he is) the more he feels himſelf entitled to be the ſcourge of all who think differently from him. Nor is it poſſible for any man to have another rule here but the ſtrength of his conviction, which, if it entitle one, entitles all equally, Jew, Pagan, Chriſtian, or Mahometan. I do not know that any beſide

beſide Roman Catholics barefacedly avow this doctrine, but I ſhould be juſtly chargeable with groſs partiality, did I aver that no ſect but theirs act in a way which this hypotheſis alone could juſtify. Other parties do not, with equal arrogancy, claim infallibility, but often, with greater inconſiſtency, they exact ſuch a reſpect to their deciſions, as can be vindicated only on the ſuppoſition that they are infallible.

The true definition of perſecution is to diſtreſs men, or haraſs them with penalties of any kind, on account of an avowed difference in opinion or religious profeſſion. It makes no material odds whether the diſtreſs be inflicted by legal authority, or by the exertion of a power altogether lawleſs. In the former caſe the evil is chargeable on the community, in the latter ſolely on the perpetrators and their abettors. But this difference, in regard to the authors, does not alter the nature of the thing. Nor does the greater or leſs ſeverity of the puniſhments make any difference but in degree.

It

It is alſo proper to obſerve, that the true ſubject, of either toleration or perſecution, is not opinion ſimply, but opinion profeſſed. To claim to ourſelves the merit, that we do not perſecute for conſcience ſake, becauſe we tolerate all the opinions which a man keeps to himſelf, and never diſcloſes to us, is ſo exceedingly abſurd, that one is at a loſs to conceive how a man can be in earneſt who advances it *. If that only be perſecution which is aimed at ſecret and concealed opinion, and if opinion revealed be a proper ſubject of correction by the magiſtrate, who does not incur thereby the imputation of intolerance, it is evident that our Lord himſelf was not perſecuted, his

* Short view of the ſtatutes, &c. Rem. iii. 'As to 'perſecution for conſcience ſake, it is in no caſe allow-'able. A man may be an atheiſt, a blaſphemer, an 'idolater, a rebel, a papiſt, or all in one, if contradic-'tions can exiſt together, and yet, if he be only ſo in 'his heart, and do not diſturb others, no human laws 'ſhould interfere. Our laws againſt popery never did, 'and never will interfere in this way. They do not al-'low perſecution even of our perſecutors.'

his apoſtles were not, as little were the primitive Chriſtians or the Proteſtants. And who, ſhall we ſay, are perſecutors by this criterion? This wonderful plea cancels the charge at once againſt Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, who never wreaked their vengeance againſt a man's ſecret ſentiments, but always againſt thoſe which he propagated, or at leaſt profeſſed. Nay, if it were poſſible to deviſe a plea that could clear Papiſts themſelves from the guilt of perſecuting, it would be this.

Having ſaid thus much for fixing the meaning of the word, and aſcertaining what is properly denominated *perſecution*, I ſhall inquire into its lawfulneſs, on the principles of Chriſtianity. Were I to plead the cauſe of toleration with Pagans, Mahometans, or Deiſts, I ſhould, for topics of argument, recur directly to the light of reaſon, and the dictates of conſcience; I ſhould examine what the principles of humanity and natural right ſuggeſt on this ſubject. This is the only common ground

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on

on which we could enter the liſts together. But as it is ſolely with Chriſtians and Proteſtants that I am concerned in the diſcuſſion of this queſtion, I ſhall, waving all other topics, recur to *ſacred writ*, particularly the NEW TESTAMENT, an authority for which we all profeſs the profoundeſt veneration. Here we have a full and unerring directory, in all that concerns the diſcharge of every Chriſtian duty, particularly in what regards the propagation and defence of the goſpel.

The methods whereby, according to the command of our Lord, his religion was to be propagated, were no other than teaching, and the attractive influence of an exemplary life. 'Go,' ſaid Chriſt to his diſciples, 'and teach all nations *. Preach the 'goſpel to every creature †.' And 'Let 'your light ſo ſhine before men, that they 'may ſee your good works, and glorify 'your Father which is in heaven ‡.' And when

* Mat. xxviii. 19. † Mark, xvi. 15.
‡ Mat. v. 16.

when their doctrine ſhould meet with no return but contempt and ſcorn, they are enjoined only to warn ſuch deſpiſers, by ſhaking off the duſt of their feet, of the ſpiritual dangers to which they expoſe themſelves *. Nay, if men ſhould proceed ſo far as to return them evil for good, and reward their wholeſome inſtructions with perſecution, their orders are, when perſecuted in one city, to flee to another †. In general, with regard to the character they are uniformly to maintain, they are commanded to 'be wiſe as ſerpents, but harm-'leſs as doves ‡.' This laſt qualification is added to appriſe them, that it is ſolely the wiſdom of the ſerpent, not his venom and his tooth, that they muſt endeavour to arm themſelves with. Indeed, of the whole armour of God to be employed in this warfare, the Apoſtle Paul (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) has given us a catalogue. 'Stand 'therefore,' ſays he, 'having your loins 'girt about with truth, and having on the 'breaſtplate

* Mat. x. 14. † —— 23.
‡ —— 16.

'breaſtplate of righteouſneſs; and your 'feet ſhod with the preparation of the gof-'pel of peace; above all taking the ſhield 'of faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to 'quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 'And take the helmet of ſalvation, and the 'ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of 'God: Praying always with all prayer and 'ſupplication, and watching thereunto with 'all perſeverance and ſupplication for all 'ſaints *. Behold the Chriſtian's panoply. But for the uſe of other arms offenſive or defenſive, in the battles of faith, I can find no warrant.

But though this ſuited the infancy of the church, when ſhe was yet feeble and tender; now that ſhe is grown hardier and more robuſt, it is not reaſonable that ſhe ſhould change her plan, and aſſume, in addreſſing her adverſaries, a bolder note? Is there no permiſſion given by our Lord, to have recourſe, when that ſhould happen, to other weapons? Had his diſciples no hint of the propriety,

* Epheſ. vi. 14, &c.

propriety, or rather neceſſity of penal ſtatutes, for adding weight to their teaching, for checking the encroachments of error, and chaſtiſing the inſolence of thoſe who ſhould dare, in the maturity of the church, to controvert her judgment? Not the ſlighteſt ſuggeſtion of ſuch an alteration. On the contrary, it appears inconſiſtent with the nature of the church deviſed by our Saviour, and modelled by his Apoſtles. Hear himſelf, in that good confeſſion which he witneſſed before Pontius Pilate; 'Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence *.' Swords and ſpears, and all ſuch inſtruments of hoſtility, are ſuited to the defence of ſecular and worldly kingdoms. If my kingdom were of this world, *then* would my ſervants fight. But ſuch weapons are prepoſterous when employed in ſupport of a diſpenſation quite ſpiritual and heavenly. In regard to it the order is, 'Put up again thy ſword

* Jo. xviii. 36.

'ſword into his place; for all they that take 'the ſword ſhall periſh with the ſword *.'

The maxims of the Apoſtles we find entirely conformable to the leſſons they had received from their Lord. 'Knowing the 'terror of the Lord,' ſays Paul, 'we per-'ſuade men †.' Our only method is perſuaſion, not compulſion. The only terrors we ſet before men, are not the terrors either of the magiſtrate or of the mob, they are the terrors of the Lord, the dread of incurring the divine diſpleaſure, and the tremendous judgment of the world to come; as, on the other hand, the only allurements are the divine promiſes. 'Though we walk 'in the fleſh,' ſays the ſame Apoſtle, 'we 'do not war after the fleſh. For the wea-'pons of our warfare are not carnal, but 'mighty through God to the pulling down 'of ſtrong holds, caſting down imagina-'tions and every high thing that exalteth 'itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and 'bringing into captivity every thought to 'the

* Mat. xxvi. 52. † 2 Cor. v. 11.

'the obedience of Chriſt *.' Are thoſe ſpiritual weapons now ſo blunted, that without the coarſe implements ſupplied by human laws, they would be of no utility? In regard to gainſayers and adverſaries, we are taught, that as 'the ſervant of the Lord 'muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, 'apt to teach, patient,' ſo he is in particular to 'inſtruct in meekneſs thoſe that op-'poſe themſelves, if God peradventure 'will give them repentance to the ac-'knowledging of the truth †.' Meekly and patiently to teach is the duty of the miniſter; the effect of this teaching, that is, the converſion of the ſinner, or the conviction of the erring, muſt be left to the ſupreme diſpoſer of events. The very utmoſt enjoined Chriſtians in regard to the obſtinate and irreclaimable, is, after repeated unſucceſsful attempts and admonitions, to avoid their company ‡.

The diſciple ought doubtleſs to be formed

* 2 Cor. x. 3, &c. † 2 Tim. ii. 24.

‡ Tit. iii. 10.

on the amiable pattern exhibited by his maſter, whoſe character it was, as delineated by the prophet, that he would not contend nor raiſe a clamour, nor make his voice be heard in the ſtreets, that he would not break the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax *; who was not leſs eminent for all the mild and gentle virtues, humility, condeſcenſion, candour, humanity, and benignity, than for thoſe which excite higher admiration, patience, firmneſs, fortitude, purity, and juſtice, not to mention the moſt comprehenſive benevolence or love. So remarkably did thoſe ſhine forth in all the ordinary occurrences of his life, and ſo deep ſeems the impreſſion to have been that they generally made, that Paul alludes to this feature in our Lord's character as to a thing univerſally known and felt, and even recurs to it as a form of obteſting, the more effectually to engage attention and perſuade. 'Now I Paul myſelf,' ſays he, 'beſeech 'you by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of 'Chriſt †.' Theſe are the qualities by which he

* Iſ. xlii. 2, 3.] † 2 Cor. x. 1.

he himſelf from the beginning attracted the notice of the people. 'I am meek and 'lowly in heart *.' His diſcourſes were not more energetic than they were gracious. They breathed humanity and kindneſs to a degree that aſtoniſhed all. The graciouſneſs, no leſs than the authority with which he ſpoke, excited univerſal admiration †. In ſhort, the fellow-feeling he had of our infirmities, his patience and forbearance towards the refractory, his compaſſion of the ignorant, and even of them that were out of the way, were, more than his miracles, the inſtruments by which the thickeſt ſpiritual darkneſs was diſpelled, the moſt inveterate prejudices ſurmounted, the hearts even of the moſt reluctant won, and the world ſubdued to the obedience of the faith.

Is it not moſt natural to think, that a cauſe will be beſt ſupported by the ſame means by which it was founded, and by which it received its firſt footing in the

 earth?

* Mat. xi. 29. † Luke, iv. 22. Mat. vii. 28, 29.

earth? Ought there not to appear in the ſervant ſome portion, ſome traces of the ſpirit of the maſter? To the diſpenſation of the goſpel, which is the diſpenſation of grace, mercy, and peace, ought there not to be a ſuitableneſs in the methods employed to promote it? Shall we then think of any expedient for defending the cauſe of Chriſt, different from thoſe which he himſelf and his apoſtles ſo ſucceſsfully employed? Nay, it were well if all that could be ſaid were, that we employ different meaſures from thoſe employed by them. Some of ours, I am afraid, on examination, will be found to be the reverſe of theirs. Chriſt engaged by being lovely, we would conſtrain by being frightful. The former conquers the heart, the latter at moſt but forces an external and hypocritical compliance, a thing hateful to God, and diſhonourable to the cauſe of his Son.

But, ſay our opponents in this argument, popery is a ſuperſtition ſo baneful as not to deſerve any favour, eſpecially at the hands of

of Proteſtants. Its intolerance to them, and perſecuting ſpirit, if there were nothing elſe we had to accuſe it of, would be ſufficient to juſtify the ſevereſt treatment we could give it. This treatment to papiſts could not be called perſecution, but juſt retaliation, or the neceſſary means of preventing perdition to ourſelves. I do not ſay that either popery or papiſts deſerve favour from us. On the contrary, I admit the truth of the charge againſt them, but not the conſequence ye would draw from it. Let popery be as black as ye will. Call it Belzebub, if ye pleaſe. It is not by Belzebub that I am for caſting out Belzebub, but by the ſpirit of God. We exclaim againſt popery, and in exclaiming againſt it, we betray but too manifeſtly, that we have imbibed of the character for which we deteſt it. In the moſt unlovely ſpirit of popery, and with the unhallowed arms of popery, we would fight againſt popery. It is not by ſuch weapons that God has promiſed to conſume *the man of ſin*, but it is by *the*

breath of his mouth, that is, *his word* *. As for us, though we be often loud enough in our pretenſions to faith, our faith is not in his word. We have no faith now in weapons inviſible and impalpable. Fire and ſteel ſuit us a great deal better. Chriſtians, in ancient times, confided in the divine promiſes; we, in theſe days, confide in acts of Parliament. They truſted to the ſword of the ſpirit, for the defence of truth and the defeat of error; we truſt to the ſword of the magiſtrate. God's promiſes do well enough, when the legiſlature is their ſurety. But if ye deſtroy the hedges and the bulwarks which the laws have raiſed, we ſhall cry with Iſrael in the days of Ezekiel, 'Behold, our bones are dried, our 'hope is loſt, we are cut off for our parts †.' There is no more ſecurity for the true religion. Proteſtantiſm is gone! all is loſt! We

* 2 Theſſ. ii. 8. In our tranſlation it is *the ſpirit of his mouth*. The original term ſignifies, *breath*, *wind*, *ſpirit*. When it is connected with mouth, lips, or noſtrils, as in this paſſage, it ought to be rendered *breath*. There is doubtleſs an alluſion to Hoſ. vi. 5. 'I 'have ſlain them by the words of my mouth.'

† Ez. xxxvii. 11.

We ſhall all be Papiſts preſently. Shall we never reflect on the denunciation of the prophet, 'Curſed be the man that truſteth 'in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and 'whoſe heart departeth from the Lord.' Let me tell thoſe people, ſo diſtruſtful in God's providence and promiſes, and ſo confident in the arm of fleſh, that the true religion never flouriſhed ſo much, never ſpread ſo rapidly, as when, inſtead of perſecuting, it was perſecuted, inſtead of obtaining ſupport from human ſanctions, it had all the terrors of the magiſtrate and of the laws armed againſt it. 'Do we provoke 'the Lord to jealouſy; are we ſtronger than 'he?*'

Ye ſay, 'popery deſerves no favour;' but are the deſerts of others, the rule of our conduct towards them? Does the inſtitution of Chriſt command, or even permit us to retaliate the injuries of others? Is the great rule which he has given us, as containing the ſum of the law and the prophets,

* Cor. x. 22.

'Whatſoever ye find that others do unto 'you, do ye alſo ſo unto them?' Is it, 'Remember to render good for good, and 'evil for evil to every man?' Has our Lord adopted the adage of the Phariſees, 'Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate 'thine enemy?' Has he ſaid, 'Bleſs them 'that bleſs you, and curſe them that curſe 'you; and for them that ſpitefully uſe you 'and perſecute you, be ſure that, when 'ye have it in your power, ye ſpitefully 'uſe and perſecute them in return?' If this be the language of Chriſt, I have done; my reaſoning is at an end, and I have totally miſtaken the matter. But if, in every article, it is oppoſite, if that authority which ought ever to be held by Chriſtians, of all authorities the moſt venerable, has enjoined, not 'Whatſoever men do,' but, 'Whatſo-'ever ye would that men ſhould do to you, 'do ye even ſo to them,'* if the law of retaliation which ſays *Eye for eye and tooth for tooth* is expreſsly ſet aſide, † and his commandment is, 'Love your enemies, do good

'to

* Mat. vii. 12.

† Mat. v. 38, &c.

'to them that hate you; bleſs them that 'curſe you, and pray for them that deſpite-'fully uſe you and perſecute you *.' If theſe, I ſay, are the dictates of Chriſt, how indecent, not to give it a worſe name, muſt any argument appear in the mouth of a Chriſtian, which ſubverts the fundamental maxims of the maſter he profeſſes to ſerve. Not to mention, that there is real injuſtice in retaliation on ſects and parties, when they are not the ſame individuals on whom we retaliate with thoſe who committed the cruelties complained of. Popery is doubtleſs a moſt intolerant religion, yet it would be both uncharitable and unjuſt to deny that there are many papiſts who would not perſecute. Proteſtantiſm, from its radical principles, is much more tolerant: it would, notwithſtanding, be moſt uncandid, rather indeed contemptibly partial, to affirm, that proteſtants have never perſecuted.

I am not ignorant that there are Chriſtian commentators, who, by their gloſſes, elude

* Mat. v. 44.

elude the force of the plaineſt precepts of our Lord, much in the way the Jewiſh rabbies invalidated the commandments of God. 'Chriſt,' ſay ſuch, 'does not mean, 'in thoſe expreſſions, the enemies of our 'nation, much leſs the enemies of our 'faith; it is only perſonal enemies he is 'ſpeaking of.' That all ſorts of enemies are included, there is not a ſhadow of ground to doubt. But that he had much more an eye to the enemies of our religion than either to national or to perſonal foes, will be evident to thoſe who attentively conſider the ſcope of this divine diſcourſe. The very kinds of injuries ſpecified, are thoſe he had expreſsly told them, they would be made to ſuffer for his name's ſake. And one principal view, of thoſe ſublime inſtructions, is plainly to fortify their minds, and prepare them for bearing properly what they muſt ſoon expect to meet with, purely on account of religion.

But the precepts of our Lord are beſt illuſtrated by his example. It may therefore

fore be worth while to examine in what manner he was affected with regard to the antipathy and mutual rancour that ſubſiſted in his time between the Jews and the Samaritans. Theſe ſtood on a footing with each other ſomewhat ſimilar (but incomparably worſe) to that of Proteſtants and Papiſts amongſt us before the late alarms. As to the principles on which they differed, Jeſus explicitly declared for his countrymen the Jews. 'Ye worſhip ye know 'not what,' ſaid he to the woman of Samaria, 'we know what we worſhip, for 'ſalvation is of the Jews*.' Did he therefore adopt the paſſions of his countrymen? Did he betray the ſmalleſt particle of the malignity with which they were inflamed towards a people whoſe ſchiſm and diſtinguiſhing tenets he was as ready to condemn as they? Let his conduct, on the occaſion referred to, ſerve for an anſwer to the queſtion. He entered freely into converſation with the woman, and did not diſdain to aſk her, though a Samaritan, to ſupply him with

* Jo. iv. 22

with a little water. This (however ſmall a matter it may appear to us) exceedingly ſurpriſed her, knowing the inhoſpitable maxims to which both parties, but eſpecially the Jews, ſo rigidly adhered. Nor did his condeſcenſion and affability more ſurpriſe this ſtranger, than they did his own diſciples on their return, who marvelled that he talked with the woman. Probably nothing leſs than the very great reſpect they entertained for their maſter, hindered them from being ſcandaliſed at his moderation, which in any other perſon they would have denominated luke-warmneſs in the cauſe of religion, and want of zeal againſt the enemies of God's people. Ye know what followed. He ſtayed with them two days, and made many converts.

Nor was this the only occaſion he took of ſhowing his diſapprobation of the intemperate zeal of his countrymen, in regard to that people. A lawyer once, to try him, aſked, 'Who is my neighbour*?' Our bleſſed

* Luke, x. 29. &c.

bleſſed Lord, knowing the corrupt explanations, on this head, current among the Jews, eſpecially among thoſe of this man's profeſſion, knowing alſo that a direct anſwer could ſerve only to awaken cavil and contradiction, did, in order to ſurmount his prejudices, addreſs himſelf, as was uſual with him on all moral queſtions, directly to the heart. Ye have his anſwer in the well known parable of the traveller who fell among thieves, and who, though a Jew, was overlooked by a prieſt and a Levite his countrymen, and relieved by a Samaritan. The intention, which ſhines forth conſpicuouſly throughout the whole, was to ſtigmatize, in the ſtrongeſt manner, that unrelenting bigotry, that inhuman intolerance, which, through the wonderful influence of ſelf-deceit, both parties cheriſhed in themſelves, under the notion of zeal for God and love to their country; it was to molify their minds towards each other, and bring them to admit a reciprocal affection producing an interchange of good offices. If the parable had repreſented the

ſympathy

ſympathy as exerciſed by a tender hearted Jew towards a ſuffering Samaritan, his purpoſe had been fruſtrated. The proud Phariſee, untouched by the misfortunes of people he abhorred, would have remonſtrated that his countryman, inſtead of acting laudably, in aſſiſting one whom he would denominate an adverſary of God, had acted ſhamefully and weakly, in allowing the nobler principles of zeal and patriotiſm, to be overcome by womaniſh pity. But its being repreſented as exerciſed by a Samaritan to a Jew, gave a different aſpect to the whole. It laid open at once the dignity and humanity of the action. It was impoſſible to withhold approbation. The approved, nay admired generoſity of an enemy was too ſtrong an argument to approve the like generous conduct on the other ſide, for one who could make any pretenſions to reaſon and juſtice, to reſiſt. Our Lord, after relating the parable, appeals to the lawyer himſelf for the anſwer to his own queſtion. ‘ Which now of ‘ theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour

'bour unto him that fell among the thieves?
'And he ſaid, He that ſhowed mercy on
'him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go,
'and do thou likewiſe.' Act thyſelf the worthy part which thou canſt not but commend in another. Think every man thy neighbour, and entitled to the offices of charity and humanity, who ſtands in need of thy aſſiſtance. Let no perſonal feud, no national enmity, no oppoſition of religion, prove an obſtruction to the exerciſe of the godlike principle of love. Surely then we are not at liberty to do evil to thoſe to whom we are commanded to do good.

On another occaſion, after cleanſing ten lepers, it did not eſcape our Lord's obſervation, nor did he fail to make it be remarked by others, that the only grateful perſon, who returned to give God thanks, was a Samaritan *, a ſure evidence, that it is not always juſt to conclude the badneſs of mens diſpoſition or practice from the falſity of ſome of their religious tenets. This

* Luke, xvii. 16. &c.

This ſingle heterodox ſectary had more piety and gratitude than the nine more orthodox Jews. In general it deſerves to be remarked, that the zeal of our bleſſed maſter, far from leading him to inflame the minds of the populace againſt thoſe who maintained erroneous doctrines in religion, influenced him, on the contrary, to moderate their heat, and bring them to make every candid allowance for differences, even groſs corruptions in principle, which, from whatever guilty cauſes they originated, might be, in thoſe who then entertained them, the natural effects of accidental circumſtances.

A Phariſee of thoſe days, a very zealous ſect, though their zeal was of a different complexion from our Lord's, a faſt friend, in his own account, to the Jewiſh intereſt and religion, might have plauſibly exclaimed againſt this lukewarmneſs, as he would have termed it. 'Would this teacher per-
'ſuade us,' might ſuch a one ſay, 'to for-
'get the days of our forefathers, and the
'ſufferings

'ſufferings they endured from the hands
'of Samaritans? Can we, without uneaſi-
'neſs for ourſelves, receive theſe inſtru-
'ments of cruelty into favour? Are we al-
'together unconcerned for what may be
'the fate of generations yet unborn? Ought
'we ever to forget what trouble they gave
'to our anceſtors in the days of Cyrus,
'how they exerted themſelves, to the ut-
'moſt, to fruſtrate their pious purpoſe of
'rebuilding the houſe of the Lord*? Is
'this a ſubject on which we can be ſilent?
'Muſt we overlook all their malicious and
'inſidious attempts againſt our nation, the
'calumnies they wrote to Artaxerxes, re-
'preſenting us as irreconcilable enemies
'and rebels, in order to incenſe that mon-
'arch againſt us, and excite him to exter-
'minate us from the face of the earth? Can
'we ever ceaſe to remember their inſults,
'their ambuſhes, and their plots to maſſacre
'our progenitors, who were reduced to the
'greateſt diſtreſs through their malice, in-
'ſomuch that our builders were under the

* Ezra, iv.

'hard neceſſity of working in the work of 'God's houſe with one hand, whilſt they 'held a weapon for the defence of their 'lives with the other, and durſt not, for 'fear of being ſurpriſed, put off their clothes 'day or night?* Shall all their treacherous 'ſchemes to circumvent us be for ever ob-'literated, their hypocritical profeſſions, 'their lying rumours, their hireling pro-'phets†?' This is but a ſpecimen of the materials for invective which this ſubject would have afforded to the zealots of thoſe days. For many other ſuch accuſations, undeniably true, might have been brought from the later parts alſo of their hiſtory. From all which they might have exclaimed, much in the ſtrain of ſome late publications, and with equal plauſibility and juſtice, 'Is it 'come to this? Are we ſo degenerate, as 'to be perſuaded by any man to deſtroy the 'fences of our religion, to break down our 'barriers, and hug Samaritans in our bo-'ſom, to put theſe enemies of God and 'man on the ſame footing with our breth-'ren

* Neh. iv. † —— vi.

ren and countrymen, and to love them as ' our friends and neighbours? The days ' have been when Jews did not need any ' warning of this kind.'

It is but too manifeſt that at the very time that our Saviour ſought to cure his kinſmen the Jews, of that bitter ungodly zeal with which they were affected to the Samaritans, the latter had not abated a title of their ancient bigotry againſt the Jews. In proof of this, witneſs the treatment which Chriſt himſelf received from them, when paſſing through their country in his way to Jeruſalem, near the time of the paſſover *. ' When the time was come,' ſays the ſacred hiſtorian, ' that he ſhould be received up, ' he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go to Jeruſa- ' lem, and ſent meſſengers before his face; ' and they went and entered into a village ' of the Samaritans, to make ready for ' him.' Probably no Jew but himſelf would, particularly on this occaſion, have choſen to be their gueſt. But his conde-

* Luke, ix. 51. &c.

ſcenſion and liberality of mind were ill underſtood by that bigotted race, and worſe requitted. 'They did not receive him; 'becauſe his face was as though he would 'go to Jeruſalem.' They would not ſo much as ſuffer him to come under their roof. Their reaſon was; he was going to Jeruſalem to celebrate the paſſover. This was matter of high offence. One great article of diſpute between the two nations, was, whether Jeruſalem was the place which God had choſen as the ſeat of his temple, where ſacrifice ſhould be offered and the feſtivals kept, or mount Gerizzim in Samaria. His going at this time to the Jewiſh capital, ſhowed plainly his opinion on the controverted point. This oppoſition to their judgment their pride could not brook. In all fiery zeal, if men would but be impartial with themſelves, they would find a greater ſhare of pride at bottom, than they are willing either to perceive or acknowledge. 'And when his diſciples James 'and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt 'thou that we command fire to come down

'from

'from Heaven, and conſume them, even 'as Elias did?' Ah! How much did they ſtill retain not only of the prejudices, but of the furious zeal of the Phariſees! How little had they imbibed of the amiable diſpoſition of their maſter! Nothing ſo like a bigot of one ſide as a bigot of the other. Though they hate one another mortally, they are, in the internal frame of their mind, eſſentially the ſame. Their differences are in compariſon merely circumſtantial and external. If the unreaſonableneſs and bad temper of one ſide, could juſtify the unreaſonableneſs and bad temper of the oppoſite, this outrageous zeal of the two diſciples would make that of the Samaritans appear very moderate. 'But Jeſus 'turned and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye 'know not what manner of ſpirit ye are 'of. For the ſon of man is not come to 'deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them. 'And they went to another village.'

This rebuke given to two apoſtles ſhould, methinks, make men a little more modeſt

in regard to their zealous fervours, leſt they alſo be found, on examinatien, totally to miſtake the ſpirit they are of. Pride, which can tolerate neither oppoſition nor contradiction, which takes fire at every affront, real or imagined, particularly an affront offered to the underſtanding, by an avowed difference of judgment, and that reſentment which is the natural offspring of pride, are but too apt to ſcreen their deformity under the decent garb of zeal. This rebuke, however, ſerves to teach us that the deſtructive zeal neither partakes of the ſpirit of our maſter, nor is adapted to promote the end of his coming. Pure and holy and harmleſs was that zeal, that heavenly flame by which he was actuated. Like that which Moſes ſaw in the buſh *, it burned, but conſumed nothing. 'They went to 'another village,' ſays the evangeliſt. He pocketed this public affront, as the men of the world would ſay, and meanly left the inſult unrevenged. Had the Samaritans deſerved this lenity and indulgence at his hands, or at the hands of the Jewiſh nation?

* Ex. iii. 8.

tion? Far from it. But his inquiry was not what *they* deſerved, but what it became *him* to do, what ſuited the cauſe of piety, humanity, and univerſal love in which he was engaged. The queſtion, 'Have they 'deſerved this favour?' uſed in the way it has been of late, ſavours very little of the diſciple of him who ſaid, 'If ye love them 'which love you, what reward have ye? 'do not even the publicans the ſame? And 'if ye ſalute your brethren only, what do 'ye more than others * ?'

It is remarkable, that among the many ſlanders caſt upon our Lord by his enemies, one of them was, that he was a Samaritan. Calumny, an inſidious liar, ſeeks always, in order to gain credit to her lies, to give them ſome ſort of connection with truth; for this renders them more efficacious in impoſing on the rabble. Somewhat of this artifice appears in all the aſperſions thrown upon our Lord. It was then impoſſible that, from ſuch a people, his open

 diſapprobation

* Mat. v. 46, 47.

diſapprobation of the virulence with which they ſpoke of Samaritans, and the inhumanity which they harboured in their hearts againſt them, ſhould not draw upon him that ignominious epithet. And if things proceed but a little longer with us, in the train they have been in of late, may we not expect to ſee every man of moderation amongſt us, who values a conformity to the ſpirit and precepts of his maſter, more highly than the blind applauſe of the deluded multitude, branded as a papiſt, or at leaſt a friend to popery?

Some have proceeded ſo far, as was lately obſerved by an honourable gentleman in the Houſe of Commons, as to publiſh inflammatory pamphlets recommending the diſſolution of all the bonds of ſociety with papiſts. The author ſeems to have taken the Jewiſh treatment of the Samaritans, which our Lord ſo plainly reprobates, for his model. I freely own, my model is the reverſe of his. It is the diſpoſition and ſentiments of Jeſus Chriſt. I am glad to find

that

that thoſe who have aſſumed the title of *Friends of the Proteſtant Intereſt*, (however much I diſapprove their conduct in other reſpects) have, with marks of diſapprobation, diſclaimed the unchriſtian performance. In regard to the writer, my firſt and moſt earneſt wiſh is, that, by the bleſſing of God, he may arrive at the knowledge of Chriſtianity, and become a Chriſtian himſelf; for hitherto his knowledge has gone no deeper than the ſurface. And if that wiſh cannot be obtained, my ſecond is, that he may no longer diſhonour the name of Proteſtant, if he bear that name, but turn papiſt altogether, of which he is more than two thirds already, and theſe two thirds not the moſt amiable part of the character.

But to return; if, with reſpect to retaliation, ſuch were the maxims of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as has been repreſented, and ſuch was the pattern given by him, can we, who profeſs to be his diſciples, imagine that theſe ought to have no influence in determining

mining our conduct? Had the Apoſtle Peter any meaning, or were they mere words of courſe that he uſed in telling us, that we are ſpecially called to the imitation of Chriſt, 'who when he was reviled, revil-'ed not again, when he ſuffered, he threa-'tened not, but committed himſelf to him 'that judgeth righteouſly? *.' Was it meant to ſerve for a leſſon to us, or as a vain boaſt of his own virtue, and that of his fellow-apoſtles, that Paul exclaimed, 'Being 'reviled, we bleſs; being perſecuted, we 'ſuffer it; being defamed, we entreat †.' But perhaps they did ſo, becauſe they were *then* weak, and could do nothing better. They could not *then* retaliate in ſo effectual a manner as to anſwer their purpoſe, and therefore thought it prudent to ſubmit, and make the beſt of the circumſtances which they could not remedy. I have heard that ſome popiſh caſuiſts, when puſhed by adverſaries who contraſted their methods of propagating the faith with thoſe of the Apoſtles,

* 1 Pet. ii. 21. &c. † 1 Cor. iv. 13.

tles, have replied in this manner: but I ſhould be ſorry to think that any proteſtant were capable of adopting a caſuiſtry which tarniſhes, or rather annihilates, the moſt ſhining virtues of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, and renders their example of little or no ſignificancy to us.

Thus, I hope, it has been made ſufficiently evident that neither the example nor the precepts either of Chriſt, the divine author of the evangelical inſtitution, or of his Apoſtles, authoriſe the uſe of the ſword or any ſuch carnal weapons for the advancement of religion; that they fortify our minds with meekneſs, faith, and patience to bear, but in no caſe permit us to inflict perſecution, not even in requital of that which we ourſelves have formerly been made to ſuffer; that the neceſſary conſequence of ſuch unſanctified meaſures is to ſubvert the *power*, for the ſake of eſtabliſhing the *form*, of godlineſs, and to make us ſacrifice the *ſpirit* of our religion, that charity which animates the whole, to a mere lifeleſs *figure*.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Concluſions to which ſound Policy would lead us, in regard to the Toleration of Papiſts.

AS to the propriety, conſidered in a political light, of giving ſuch a toleration to papiſts in Scotland, as has been already granted in England and Ireland, I muſt obſerve, in the firſt place, that this is a point, the deciſion of which belongs properly to the legiſlature. To me it appears particularly improper in eccleſiaſtical judicatories to meddle with it. It is a queſtion ſolely regarding the ſafety of the body politic. If the conſtitution will not be endangered by ſuch a meaſure, the principles of reaſon, and conſequently of ſound policy, and alſo the principles of Chriſtianity, as has been ſhown, lead us to conclude that it ought to be adopted; otherwiſe, not. Now the queſtion in regard to the danger of the conſtitution is ſurely of the department of the eſ-

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tates of the kingdom aſſembled in parliament. And though every little borough-corporation, pariſh meeting, ſociety of artificers and others, corporate and not corporate, weavers, coblers, porters, &c. &c. preſume that they are wiſe enough to direct the King, Lords, and Commons, and that they themſelves underſtand better what concerns the intereſt, ſecurity, and government of the nation, this abſurd conduct cannot hurt ſuch ſocieties. They have no reputation to loſe. Great allowances ought to be made, and will be made by ſuperiors, for their folly and ignorance. But would it become the ſupreme judicatory, and repreſentative of this national church, in imitation of ſuch examples, to ſtep out of their line, and, without the moſt urgent neceſſity, to obtrude upon the legiſlative body, their advice unaſked? Nothing in my opinion would more effectually leſſen the dignity of that venerable court. There is but one caſe in which I conceive there would be any propriety in ſuch a meaſure; and of this I ſhall take notice afterwards.

But

But ſome will object, 'Why do you 'talk of going beyond our line? Are not 'our eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies the natural 'guardians of our religion? Who then ſo 'proper as they to give warning of the 'danger, and to uſe the precautions which 'ought to be employed, in order to pre-'vent it or ward it off?' I do not know preciſely what meaning ye affix to the word *guardians*; but in one ſenſe I certainly admit that both our paſtors and our eccleſiaſtical judicatories are guardians in their ſeveral ſpheres. But this implies no more than that, when they apprehend danger, they ought to double their diligence in uſing the ſpiritual weapons above taken notice of, which the goſpel ſupplies them with, for defending the people againſt ſeduction of every kind; and that, if there has been any remiſſneſs in diſcharging the miniſterial duties in time paſt, there may be more vigilance and greater exertions in time to come. But their guardianſhip, I imagine, never extended ſo far as to entitle them, from any fancied neceſſity, to counteract the very ſpi-

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rit of their religion, and, for their maſter's ſervice, to oppoſe alike his precepts and example. Yet ſuch is manifeſtly the nature of that recourſe to the ſecular arm, ſo ſtrenuouſly argued for by ſome; a recourſe which originated among papiſts, and would have been left with papiſts, if proteſtants had been in all reſpects conſiſtent with themſelves *.

But however improper it may be in our judicatories, as ſuch, to interfere with the legiſlature in this affair, we may be permitted as individuals in this land of liberty, for the ſake of quieting the minds of well-meaning people, freely to canvaſs the queſtion of the expediency of the projected toleration. This is the privilege, if uſed diſcreetly, of all

* Short view, Rem. iii. 'The very name of religious 'toleration is juſtly dear to every proteſtant.' He muſt be very ſhallow who does not perceive that with ſuch proteſtants as theſe writers, it is then only *the name* that is dear. 'The idea of perſecution for conſcience ſake 'is moſt odious and deteſtable.' Qu. Have they expected to be read by none but fools?

all Britiſh ſubjects, in regard to public meaſures. I ſhall, therefore, with all due deference to my ſuperiors, ſubmit my ſentiments on this head to the candid examination of the reader.

It has been ſaid, and very juſtly, that in every ſtate, as in every individual, there is a right of ſelf-preſervation, which implies, amongſt other things, that of protecting itſelf againſt violence offered, either from without, or from within, from foreign hoſtile ſtates, or from its own ſeditious and corrupt members, and conſequently of repelling force by force. It has been urged further, that it is the duty of the magiſtrate, who is the truſtee, and conſequently the ſervant, of the ſtate, not only to defend the community when attacked, but to watch for its ſafety, and, by every juſt method which the conſtitution empowers him to uſe, that is, as far as his truſt extends, to prevent every danger which may be foreſeen, as well as to remove that which is preſent.

preſent. Both poſitions are in my opinion undeniable.

Now on theſe, and on theſe only, is founded the magiſtrate's title to interfere with religious ſects. Opinion is naturally beyond the juriſdiction of magiſtracy, whoſe proper object is public peace or national proſperity. As this cannot be injured or interrupted by men otherwiſe than by their actions, theſe are ſtrictly all that are immediately cognizable by civil judicatories. As however it is unqueſtionable, that opinion has great influence on practice, ſo the open profeſſion of ſuch opinions as are manifeſtly ſubverſive of the natural or civil rights of the ſociety, or of the rights of individual members of the ſociety, is undoubtedly to be regarded as an overt act which falls under the cognizance of the magiſtrate. It is only in this view that opinion ought ever to be held, as coming under his juriſdiction. Conſidered in a religious view, as true or falſe, orthodox or heterodox, and conſequently as affecting our ſpiritual and eternal intereſts, it is certainly not of the department of the

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ſecular powers. Yet this diſtinction has not always been obſerved. And thoſe in power, from conſiderations of a ſpiritual nature, which were totally without their province, have thought themſelves bound, by the moſt ſacred ties, to do all they could for the encouragement of their own opinions, becauſe ſuppoſed to be ſound, and for the ſuppreſſion of every opinion as unſound, which ſtood oppoſed to them.

Hence that ſpirit of intolerance which has for many centuries proved the bane of Chriſtendom, and which ſtill continues the bane of many countries in Europe, as well as in other quarters of the globe. Nothing can be more evident, than that if the magiſtrate is entitled, nay obliged, by all the weight of his authority, to cruſh opinions, merely becauſe erroneous, and conceived by him pernicious to the ſoul, this obligation muſt be inherent in the office of magiſtracy, and conſequently incumbent on every magiſtrate. Now, as his only immediate rule for what he is bound to cheriſh, and what to cruſh, is, and can be no other than, his

his own opinions, and (the magiſtrate having no more claim than private perſons to infallible direction) as the ſame variety of ſentiments may be, nay in different ages and nations has been, in thoſe of this rank as in thoſe of any other; it will be found, on this hypotheſis, the duty of rulers to ſuppreſs and perſecute in one country, and at one period, what it is the duty of rulers in another country, or even in the ſame country, at another period, to cheriſh and protect. This conſequence, how abſurd ſoever, is fairly deducible from the aforeſaid principle, and ought therefore to be held a ſufficient demonſtration of the abſurdity of that principle. One of the many unhappy conſequences which has flowed from the iniquitous but general practice of acting in conformity to that falſe tenet, is, that the minds of parties, even thoſe whoſe differences in opinion are merely ſpeculative, and could never, if left to themſelves, have affected the peace of ſociety, have been exaſperated againſt one another. Jealouſy and envy have ariſen, and been foſtered by mu-

tual injuries. Every ſect has been led to view in every other a rival and an enemy, a party from which, if raiſed to power, it would have every thing to dread. And as this almoſt equally affects both ſides, each has played the tyrant in its turn. As mens conduct is influenced more by paſſion than by cool reflection, all have been very ſlow in diſcovering the falſity of the principle, the magiſtrate's right of interfering, when there is no viſible danger to the ſtate; this right, though ſometimes controverted by the weaker party, the prevalent ſect has always affirmed and defended, thinking itſelf entitled to a monopoly of the principle, as being alone, in its own account, on the ſide of truth. The remembrance too of injuries received, inſtead of opening their eyes, and ſhowing them the ruinous conſequences of that radical error, has but ſerved to rivet them in it, and make them avail themſelves of it in their turn. Nay, ſo inconſiſtent a creature is man! Thoſe who but a little before ſtrenuouſly maintained the right of private judgment, are no ſooner raiſed to

power,

power, than they obſtinately refuſe that right to others. As they have been accuſtomed to look on the other party as enemies, and have been badly treated by them, they think they derive hence an additional right to perſecute them from the law of retaliation.

This, I acknowledge, renders religious ſects in another view, an object of attention to the magiſtrate. A party whoſe avowed principles, conſidered by themſelves, have nothing hoſtile to ſociety, may, from its ſtrength and habitual enmity to the predominant ſect, endanger the public peace. Hence it may happen, that civil governours, though perfectly indifferent which of two ſects they ſhall favour, may find it incompatible with the ſafety of the ſtate, to give equal countenance to both: Perfect equality, where there is reciprocal hatred, could not long ſubſiſt, without giving riſe to reciprocal hoſtilities. The utmoſt vigilance could not always prevent this effect, which might, in the end, overturn the conſtitution.

But where the public tranquillity has been long the ſole object of the magiſtrate, there is hardly any riſk of his adopting thoſe meaſures which cauſe mens minds to rankle, and produces in their breaſts that moſt unlovely and unchriſtian diſpoſition one towards another.

It is admitted, that when the public peace is in danger, it is his duty to interpoſe. Sedition or rebellion is not entitled to take ſhelter in religious ſentiments, nor can the plea of liberty of conſcience juſtly avail any man, for invading the liberty or property, ſacred or civil, of another. So much for what appears to be the original rights of the civil power in what concerns ſects in religion. It muſt be owned, however, that there are many particular circumſtances, which, when they occur, ought, in a great meaſure, to reſtrain the exertion of a power otherwiſe warrantable. When parties are already formed, and of long continuance, though their fundamental principles be unfriendly to the rights of ſociety, their numbers,

bers, and weight, and other conſiderations, may render an indulgence, otherwiſe unmerited, the more eligible meaſure, becauſe in its conſequences the leſs evil. It may however be remarked, in paſſing, that though there be ſeveral prudential conſiderations which may render it proper to extend favour to thoſe whoſe tenets, or temper, or both, ſhow that they but ill deſerve it, no conſideration can give the magiſtrate a right to perſecute any party whoſe principles, viewed in a political light, are nowiſe unfriendly to the rights of their fellow-citizens, or of the ſtate, and whoſe diſpoſition and conduct is peaceable and inoffenſive.

Now to apply the principles above laid down to the caſe in hand; what ſhall we ſay of the tenets of papiſts in regard to the ſecular powers? Are they, or are they not friendly to civil government in general, or to the preſent government of this iſland in particular? As to the firſt of theſe queſtions, all papiſts, it muſt be owned, acknowledge a certain obedience to be due to a fo-

reign and independent power, the Pope. And though this, by ſome of them (for they are not unanimous) is ſaid to be only in ſpirituals, yet, in matters of juriſdiction, it has never been poſſible to aſcertain the preciſe boundary between ſpirituals and temporals. Nor can it be denied that, in doubtful caſes, ſuperſtition inclines ſtrongly to favour the claims of the former. This, if it ſhould be an error, the ſuperſtitious always conſider as the ſafer error of the two. And in regard to the ſecond queſtion, they were, doubtleſs, till of late, in this part of the iſland, generally diſaffected to the preſent royal family. Nor could any perſon wonder that it was ſo, conſidering the cauſe of the abdication of James VII. grandfather to the pretender.

As to the aſpect which their tenets bear to civil ſociety, for it is neither in a religious nor in a moral view, but ſolely in a political, that I am here conſidering them, it muſt be acknowledged that to ſocial union their principles are nowiſe adverſe. Witneſs

— thoſe

thoſe kingdoms and ſtates in Europe, where the whole, or the greater part, of the people are popiſh. It has been remarked, however, that the Romiſh religion is not equally favourable to a free government as the proteſtant. But though there be ſomething like a ſervility of ſpirit in implicit faith, or the belief of infallibility in any human tribunal, which is more congenial to political ſlavery, it cannot be ſaid that the former is incompatible with civil freedom. This country, as well as others, was free, even when Roman Catholic; and it would not be juſt to deny that there have been of that communion, eminent patrons of the liberties of the people.

As to the aſpect with which the party in general (I ſpeak not of individuals) eyes other ſects, it is certainly very unfavourable. Her doctrine concerning the ſpiritual ſtate, both here and hereafter, of all who dare diſpute her deciſions, whom ſhe denominates heretics and ſchiſmatics, does not tend to cheriſh affection towards them.

In

In this, however, ſhe is not ſingular. The caſe is the ſame with all fanatical ſects. But as temper is not formed entirely by principle, but is often as much the reſult of habit and accidental circumſtances, there are great differences in this reſpect in different places. In thoſe popiſh countries, where they have none of any different ſect living among them, and little occaſion to know any thing of ſuch but by the repreſentations of their prieſts, it cannot be doubted, that the people put proteſtants almoſt in the ſame claſs with demons. They conſider them as a ſort of devils incarnate. I muſt acknowledge, that, in thoſe proteſtant countries, or thoſe parts of proteſtant countries where they have no papiſts, and conſequently know nothing of them but by hearſay, their judgment is equally unfavourable. But in thoſe nations which have long enjoyed the bleſſings of peace and toleration, where proteſtants and papiſts live together, as in Holland, where both are protected, and neither is allowed to injure the other, they come ſoon to conſider each other

other as human creatures and brethren, and to contract mutual friendſhips and intimacies, ſcarcely minding the difference of religious ſentiments. And even in this country, it is notorious, that in thoſe parts where papiſts are leaſt known, they are moſt hated and dreaded. There is nothing which more ſtrongly recommends toleration to a benevolent heart, than that it has a powerful tendency to humanize the tempers of the moſt oppoſite ſects, and conciliate them to a friendly intercourſe of good offices to one another. This ſerves to lay the mind open to conviction, by removing gently and gradually thoſe rooted prejudices which are the greateſt obſtruction to it.

Upon the whole, the queſtion comes to this, whether ſo inconſiderable a party (for both in number of people and in property, their proportion is ſo very ſmall as not to be worth mentioning) of ſuch a character as is above delineated (and I have endeavoured to do it with the utmoſt impartiality, neither

neither exaggerating nor extenuating their faults) can be of any danger to the conſtitution of this country? It ought always to be taken into conſideration, that it is not propoſed that they be admitted into any, even the loweſt offices of magiſtracy or legiſlation, or any place of public truſt. It ought alſo to be remembered, that if at any time any unforſeen evil or danger ſhould ariſe from that quarter, the legiſlature, of which they can make no part, and on which, conſidering their very great inferiority in all reſpects, they can have no conceivable influence, have it always in their power to give a timely check to it.

In regard to the malign aſpect of popery towards ſectaries, as ſhe calls them, whom doubtleſs ſhe conſiders as rebellious children; has not experience in this and other countries, fully evinced, that even papiſts can be ſoftened by good uſage; that lenity and toleration deaden the aſperity which the bare name of heretic (till they become familiarized to their perſons) raiſes in their minds:

minds: And as to the diſaffection of which they are ſuſpected to the reigning family, why ſhould we judge more harſhly of them on this head, than of thoſe proteſtants amongſt us, much more numerous, who have been known formerly to have the ſame attachments to the Stuart-family with them? I do not ſpeak thus to raiſe an odium againſt any party. I would be the laſt man in Britain to attempt it. Beſides, it is evident to every one who reflects, that we can have nothing to fear from our nonjurors, a party which has been ſenſibly declining for many years paſt. I only mention them for the ſake of obſerving, that if we admit that many families, once in that way, have, within theſe laſt thirty years, changed their political creed, it does not ſeem reaſonable to ſuſpect, that many papiſts, in the ſame time, may not have changed theirs.

In ſome reſpects the change is leſs to papiſts than to them. The divine right of monarchical government on the patriarchal plan,

plan, as it is called, and conſequently the indefeaſible hereditary right of the abdicated family to the crown of theſe realms, is no principle of popery. The attachment of papiſts was a perſonal attachment, or at moſt a conſequence of their attachment to the cauſe for which that family ſuffered. But in regard to forms of government, or particular governors, their religion leaves them at full liberty. A papiſt may be a republican, or a friend to monarchy, abſolute or limited. In theſe matters he is noway confined by his religion. And that he ſhould change in an attachment not founded in principle, is nothing extraordinary. He may be convinced that preſcription takes place in government, and, for the peace of ſociety, ought to take place, as well as in other matters; that, without admitting this principle, there would be few or no legal rulers now exiſting in the world, as moſt ſovereignities may be traced backwards to manifeſt uſurpation. Whatever judgment therefore he may form of the revolution, there is no inconſiſtency in his

his being a loyal ſubject to the preſent royal family. And in regard to ſuch as ſhall take the oath preſcribed by the act of parliament for England, or the like oath propoſed for papiſts here, I ſhall only ſay that it would be extremely uncharitable to ſuppoſe them all perjured.

But as ſome things have been plauſibly urged againſt the credibility of their oaths, it may be worth while to beſtow, on this point, a little more attention. It is ſaid, 'The diſpenſing power of the Pope, his 'infallibility, the principle that no faith is 'to be kept with heretics, all ſerve to in-'validate their promiſes and oaths, eſpeci-'ally when given to thoſe whom they re-'gard as heretics.' That the Popes have claimed ſuch a diſpenſing power in looſing the obligation of the moſt ſolemn vows and contracts, and that many people have been blind enough to credit this moſt arrogant and impious claim, it would be to give the lie to all hiſtory, even the moſt authentic, to deny. Such alſo is the power they have

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claimed and exerciſed of depoſing kings and emperors, and of looſing their ſubjects from their allegiance. Such alſo are their pretenſions to infallibility, their corrupt maxims, ſubverſive of faith, given to heretics, in all which they have been ſupported by hireling and proſtitute writers among the clergy, friars, canoniſts, and expectants of preferment in the church. But to ſay thus much is one thing, and to ſay that theſe points are received univerſally as doctrines of the church is another. We ought to be juſt even to enemies.

In regard to the laſt of the above maxims, that faith is not to be kept to heretics, though it was never aſſerted, in ſo many words, by any council, it is unqueſtionable, that the council of Conſtance came ſo near giving it their ſanction, in the decree they pronounced for the eaſe of the emperor's conſcience, whom they had ſeduced to act a moſt perfidious part, as well as in the whole of their infamous proceedings with regard to Huſs, that though it cannot be called

called an eſtabliſhed principle of their religion, it has received that countenance from the ſpiritual powers among them, which furniſhes but too good a handle for the clamours and jealouſies of proteſtants. And I will acknowledge, in paſſing, that as I could put no confidence, where religion is concerned, in the faith of a man who would vindicate a procedure ſo ſubverſive of that ſecurity in engagements which is the moſt eſſential bond of ſociety, ſo I can never conſider that man as dangerous, who, in this age and country, has the egregious folly to attempt the vindication. But in general, when recourſe is had to experience, I am ſatisfied, there is no ground to conſider it as a maxim, ſo prevalent in that party, as to deſtroy all faith in their promiſes. If its prevalence were ſo great, what hindred them in England, from taking the oath of ſupremacy, or the formula in Scotland? Theſe would have ſecured them againſt many inconveniencies to which their religion expoſed them. And if there be ſome inſtances of their ſwearing

falſely, from the temptation of intereſt, can we ſay that perjury is abſolutely unexampled amongſt ourſelves? It is well known that in England, papiſts had it in their power to relieve themſelves, by means of certain oaths, before the paſſing of the late act. But thoſe oaths were different from that now enacted. Now a man who thinks he may take oaths, and be under no obligation, or who thinks he has it in his power to obtain a diſpenſation from that obligation, has no reaſon to make any diſtinction between one oath and another. The diſpenſing power ſerves equally for all. Now that thoſe in England, who, on no conſideration, could be induced to take the oaths formerly required, do not heſitate to take that required by the late act, is evidence ſufficient to a reaſonable perſon, that they conſider this as what they may, with a good conſcience, take, but not the former.

'But how is it poſſible,' ſome will object, 'that they can conſcientiouſly abjure 'ſo many high prerogatives of the ſovereign

'reign pontif, the ſucceſſor of Saint Peter, 'and vicar of Jeſus Chriſt? Such are his 'diſpenſing power, his ſupremacy in tem-'porals, and his infallability; ſince it is 'unqueſtionable that theſe prerogatives he 'has both claimed, and pretended to exer-'ciſe?' To this I can only anſwer, that it is a known fact, that Roman Catholics themſelves are not unanimous in regard to the juſtice of thoſe claims. For example, it is a tenet univerſally held by them, that the church is infallible. But in the explanation of this tenet they differ exceedingly, as well as in the directions they give where we ought to ſeek for her unerring oracles. Some ſend us to the pope, with whom alone, according to them, this amazing privilege is lodged; ſome to the pope and ecumenical council acting in conjunction; ſome to the council, though without the pope; ſome to the church univerſal, that is, to whatever opinions univerſally obtain in thoſe they term catholic countries.

So notorious it is, that even among pa-

piſts there are that are more, and there are that are leſs, papiſtical. Accordingly, ſome even of their writers denominate thoſe *Pontificii* papiſts, by way of diſtinction, who defend all the exorbitant claims of the papacy. Nay, ſo certain it is that the Romaniſts themſelves are greatly divided on this head, that the famous council of Conſtance above referred to, as well as the council of Piſa that preceded it, aſſerted its own ſuperiority above the pope in the moſt expreſs terms, and indeed acted in an entire conformity to this doctrine *. It is not juſt, therefore,

* I cannot help obſerving here a ridiculous blunder in the writers of the *Short View*, &c. Rem. ii. Speaking of the condemnation of Huſs, they add, 'to the 'everlaſting diſgrace of an infallible pope,' &c. They have certainly derived all their knowledge of that affair from Dr W. A. D's. letter to Mr G. H. This ſhould prove a caveat to thoſe who pick up their information in this manner, not to venture a ſingle ſtep beyond their authority. That council acknowledged no pope, at the time that Huſs was condemned. P. John xxiii. who called them together, they depoſed, on an accuſation of the moſt ſhocking crimes, concerning which I ſhall only obſerve, that *hereſy* and *ſchiſm* were in the number.

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* Job, xiii. 7.

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ſeveral ſuch abſurdities, will be found, from a proper attention to eccleſiaſtic hiſtory, to have ebbed and flowed, in that church, with knowledge and ignorance. In proportion as knowledge increaſed, thoſe opinions loſt credit; as ignorance increaſed, they gained credit. Whatever influence authority may have on weak minds, in making ſpeculative dogmas, however nonſenſical, be received with veneration, there is a principle in human nature, which, till the mind is wholly immerſed in ſuperſtition and darkneſs, will effectually prevent ſuch moral abſurdities from being generally aſſented to. Nay, a principle of honour, as well as a ſenſe of right, go far to check the progreſs of thoſe diſgraceful maxims.

I ſhall only add to the above remarks, that even in regard to thoſe whoſe conformity to the civil eſtabliſhment may not be ſo cordial as could be wiſhed (for that there may be ſome ſuch inſtances who can deny?) it will ſtill have this good effect viewed in a political light, that it will be a check both

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on their actions and on their converſation. Principles openly and ſolemnly abjured, it may be ſuppoſed that men, eſpecially thoſe of a ſacred character, will, for their own ſakes, not be forward to avow, and ſtill leſs to inculcate. There is therefore here a real acceſſion of ſtrength to the civil eſtabliſhment, without the ſmalleſt prejudice that I can perceive to the proteſtant intereſt.

But the incompetency even of the Britiſh parliament for making ſuch a change in the laws wherein religion is concerned, has been boldly aſſerted. The eſtabliſhment of the preſent preſbyterian church of Scotland was declared January 1707, a fundamental article of the union of the two kingdoms, not to be altered afterwards even by the joint legiſlature of both. In the act declaring this, there is a clauſe perpetually confirming the 5th act, parl. 1690, which was the act eſtabliſhing preſbytery, and ratifying the confeſſion of faith. In this there is a general ratification of all former acts made againſt popery. But the acts now propoſed

to be in part repealed, could never be comprehended in that clauſe, becauſe they were not former but poſterior acts. The writers of the *Short View* * argue in a way entirely their own. 'The acts,' ſay they, 'directly relating to this one, and conſequently 'ratified with it, and unalterably eſtabliſhed, 'are chiefly three, act 2d parl. 1700, act '3d, 1702, act 2d, 1703.' Now that theſe acts are related to act 5th, 1690, as they all relate to religion, nobody will diſpute; but that they were ratified by an act ten or twelve years before they were made, theſe gentlemen have the whole honour of diſcovering. Let it be obſerved, that theſe acts, though poſterior to the act 1690, were prior to the act 1707. Yet this act, for the ſecurity of religion at the union, paſſes over thoſe more recent acts in relation to popery, and only declares perpetual an act made ſo many years before them, thereby plainly leaving the intermediate acts to the wiſdom of the Britiſh legiſlature, to confirm, repeal, or alter at any time, as they ſhould find expedient,

* Rem. 1.

pedient, and only giving perpetuity to the act that firſt, after the Revolution, eſtabliſhed the preſbyterian form of government, and ratified the confeſſion of faith. This argument (ſhall I call it?) by which theſe writers ſay modeſtly, their 'averment is ſurely proved to a demonſtration;' I have been the more particular in expoſing, becauſe, in a certain event, it is capable of being made a very bad uſe of among the people.

'But whatever be in the competency of 'parliament, muſt not the propoſed repeal 'be highly prejudicial to the proteſtant in-'tereſt?' ſay thoſe who conſider themſelves as the patrons and friends of that intereſt, 'Will it not throw down all our fen-'ces, open the door to Jeſuits, ſeminary 'prieſts, &c. and give liberty to the open 'profeſſion and exerciſe of Romiſh idola-'tries, as well as give full ſcope to their 'vile artifices for the perverſion of our 'youth?' All this appears ſpecious to thoſe who do not reflect, and conſider things

things ſeverally and attentively. Firſt, they may profeſs their religion openly and ſafely. Be it ſo. I cannot ſee how that circumſtance alone can attribute to their increaſe. The quakers (a moſt harmleſs race) have long enjoyed that privilege; yet it does not appear that they have been increaſing. I think the contrary has been the fact. But if one were to deviſe a method for giving conſequence to thoſe of that way, and producing a change favourable to their increaſe, he could not deviſe a better than to get all thoſe laws againſt papiſts enacted againſt quakers, eſpecially if, by high premiums, wretches were bribed to turn informers, and contribute to the execution of the laws.

The bulk of mankind are more influenced by their paſſions, in forming their opinions, than by reaſon. Render people objects of our compaſſion, bring us once heartily to ſympathiſe with them as with perſons oppreſſed, not for any crime, but for what they cannot remedy, their opinions,

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and ye have gone a great deal to make us turn proſelytes, and go over to thoſe whom we cannot help pitying as perſons ſuffering under the greateſt cruelty and injuſtice. If the ſufferers ſhould diſplay ſome patience and fortitude, they will need no ſtronger arguments to perſuade ſpectators more remarkable for ſenſibility of heart than acuteneſs of underſtanding, that they muſt have truth upon their ſide. They will reverence them as ſaints. Wo to that nation, whoſe laws every ſenſible and honeſt heart muſt be convinced there is greater virtue in diſobeying than in obeying! This is the caſe with perſecuting laws, though the perſecutors ſhould have truth upon their ſide. If men, through fear of the puniſhments ye enact, belie their conſcience, and in ſo doing ſin againſt God, abjure what they believe, and profeſs what they think damnable errors, ye compel them to deſtroy their peace of mind, make ſhipwreck of faith and of a good conſcience. They ſin heinouſly; 'for 'whatſoever is not of faith is ſin.' And ye legiſlators and judges, authors, promoters,

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and executors of ſuch iniquitous laws, ye who ought to be the terror of evil doers and the praiſe of them that do well, ye are their tempters, ſeducers, and corruptors. The generality of men have a feeling of this, though they cannot reaſon upon it or explain it, and ſuch a feeling has great influence among the people.

The only way I know of preventing this, is by ſteeling the heart againſt all compaſſion, reſolving ſteadily to perſiſt, and ſtick at nothing, till the end is attained. 'There is 'nothing ſo ridiculous,' ſays a late writer *, 'in reſpect of policy, as a moderate and half-'way perſecution. It only frets the ſore; 'it raiſes the ill humour of mankind; excites 'the keener ſpirits; moves indignation in 'beholders; and ſows the very ſeeds of 'ſchiſm in mens boſoms. A reſolute and 'bold-faced perſecution leaves no time or 'ſcope for theſe engendering diſtempers, or 'gathering ill humours. It does the work 'at once, by extirpation, baniſhment, or 'maſſacre.'

* Charact. Miſ. 2. Ch. 3.

'maſſacre.' It is indeed a fact well authenticated by hiſtory and experience, that perſecution can never do ſervice to a cauſe, unleſs it be carried the utmoſt length poſſible, as in Spain and Portugal. Now, if ſuch a thing were practicable in this country (as bleſſed be God, it is not) will any proteſtant ſtand forth and ſay it would be deſirable?

Yet that any thing leſs does unſpeakable hurt to the cauſe it was meant to ſerve, might, if neceſſary, be verified by a cloud of witneſſes, ſuch as the firſt planting of Chriſtianity, the reformation both abroad and at home. I ſhall however at this time go no farther for evidence than to what happened in this country in the laſt century. When the epiſcopal form of church government was eſtabliſhed at the Reſtoration, if our civil and eccleſiaſtic rulers had had any ſhare of moderation, prudence, or common humanity, the minds of men would, without great difficulty, have been pretty generally conciliated to the eſtabliſhment

bliſhment then made, as neither in doctrine nor in form of worſhip (for they uſed no liturgy) could the difference be called material. But the ſpirits of our governors at that time were ſuch as would bear no contradiction, and brook no delay. Their immediate recourſe was to penal ſtatutes, the firſt thing always thought of by men of ſtrong paſſions, but weak judgment. Statutes were accordingly enacted, breathing vengeance againſt all who would not conform in every thing to the eccleſiaſtical model that had been erected. They too pleaded the right of retaliating. And it would be doing them great injuſtice to deny, that the conduct of thoſe who had preceded them, had, on this head, ſupplied them with plenty of matter. A perſecution accordingly was commenced, and furiouſly carried on. Numbers of unhappy men (infatuated, as ſome would call them) who never meant to be criminal, but who could not be brought to think it their duty to profeſs, through fear of human puniſhment, what they did not believe, were daily ſacrificed to the rage

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of their ſtill more infatuated rulers. What was the conſequence? Did they, by theſe means, ſtop the progreſs of ſchiſm, as they called it, and effect the ſo much deſired uniformity? Quite the reverſe. The tyranny of the ruling powers alienated the minds of the people; inſomuch, that at the Revolution, wherever the perſecution had been hotteſt, the friends of preſbytery were the moſt numerous: On the contrary, in thoſe parts where the people had been bleſſed with paſtors and rulers that were men of moderation and of a Chriſtian ſpirit, there was a very general conformity to the eſtabliſhed model.

But it will be replied, 'We do not ſeek 'to perſecute; we deſire only that things 'may continue as they are. Papiſts were 'not perſecuted before the propoſed repeal; 'and we do not ſee why they ſhould aſk 'any indulgence beſide what was ſo gene-'rally granted them.' Is it not evident that the indulgence they had was merely by connivance? It was no legal toleration.

And

And is it agreeable to any body to remain on ſo precarious a foot, and at the mercy of every body? It muſt be owned that the law was rarely executed, in conſequence of the temper of the times, and the lenity of our government. Yet there are ſome inſtances of its having been executed. And what was the reaſon that it was not oftener? It was the conviction which men have, when their minds are not inflamed by fanatic zeal, that the law was too ſevere, and, when ſelf-defence does not render it abſolutely neceſſary (which God be thanked is not our caſe) not reconciliable with the principles either of humanity or of juſtice (it was, I ſay, this conviction) that prevented its execution. Nay, ſo ſtrongly do men ſeem to be perſuaded of its injuſtice, that many who are againſt the repeal declare ſolemnly that they would never give information againſt a papiſt, or take any concern in the execution of that law. Now, if it was a juſt and neceſſary law, why ſtartle at the execution which ought to be eſteemed a public ſervice? Why were not papiſts, not for any wilful or intended crime, but for what,

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through the misfortune of their education (which might have been our own caſe) they believed in their conſcience to be their duty; why were they not informed on, dragged before the magiſtrate, ſtript of their property, driven naked from their families and homes, baniſhed into foreign countries to beg or ſhift for bread, it may be in their old age, among ſtrangers, the beſt way they could; and if they returned, why were they not hanged without mercy? for this, we are told coolly, is unavoidable *, to make the law effectual. But if acting thus would be unjuſt, why ſuffer a law to remain in force, which, if it anſwer no other purpoſe, will at leaſt anſwer this bad purpoſe of being a reproach on the nation, and a ſevere retort againſt every proteſtant, who, in arguing with a papiſt, urges the different ſpirit of the two religions?

'But juſt or unjuſt,' ſay ſome, 'it is 'better to have it as a rod over their

* Short View. Note on the extracts from K. William's act.

'heads. That is, in other words, Though 'we have no mind to do injuſtice at pre-'ſent, we wiſh to have it in our power to 'be unjuſt with impunity, when we pleaſe, 'nay to bribe others to be villains (for the 'law gives a high reward to informers) 'that thoſe who have no religion at all, no 'ſenſe of virtue or honour, who neither fear 'God nor regard man, may be tempted by 'avarice.' Is this a law becoming a Chriſtian nation? Is it ſuch as it would become the miniſters of religion to interpoſe for either preſerving or inforcing? 'Wo to 'him,' ſaith the prophet *, 'that eſtabliſh-'eth a city by iniquity.' And ſhall the city of God itſelf, his church, his cauſe, the cauſe of truth and purity, be eſtabliſhed by ſuch accurſed means? Are we proteſtants? And do we ſay, 'Let us do evil that good 'may come?' Yet of ſuch the apoſtle tells us †, that their 'damnation is juſt.' I have ever been taught, as a Chriſtian principle, and a proteſtant principle, that a good cauſe ought to be promoted by lawful means only; and that it was in the true

* Hab. ii. 12. † Rom. iii. 8.

true ſpirit of popery to think that the end would juſtify the means. We are now adopting all their maxims, and making them our own. We ſeem reſolved that we ſhall have nothing on this head to reproach papiſts with. A great outcry has been raiſed of late about the progreſs of popery. I join in the complaint. I ſee her progreſs where I leaſt expected it; and I lament it heartily, the more eſpecially as ſhe comes in *ſo queſtionable a ſhape*. If we muſt have popery, I would, above all things, have her retain her own likeneſs. The devil is never ſo dangerous, as when he transforms himſelf into an angel of light.

Beſides, how groſsly impolitic, as well as unjuſt, is the propoſed oppoſition? If we have any regard to our proteſtant brethren in popiſh countries, ſhall we furniſh the ruling powers there, with a plauſible pretext for perſecuting them? 'See,' ſay they, referring to the preſbyterian church of Scotland, 'in what manner we ſhould be treat-'ed, if theſe our countrymen of the ſame

'principles with them ſhould ever arrive 'at power.' This, we all know, is the common way of arguing. It is far from being a juſt way; for a concurrence in doctrine does not neceſſarily imply a concurrence in the methods to be employed in defending it. But we need the leſs wonder, that others ſhould argue thus, when we argue thus ourſelves. The papiſts in Paris about two hundred years ago maſſacred the Pariſian proteſtants; and the papiſts in Ireland acted the like tragedy in the laſt century on Iriſh proteſtants; therefore we are entitled to puniſh for thoſe execrable deeds the papiſts of the preſent age in this country, however guiltleſs of thoſe murders, however harmleſs in their life and conduct we have hitherto found them; though we can charge them with no crime, but that they are papiſts. It is ſaid to have been a law amongſt our clans in ages of barbarity, that when a perſon belonging to one clan murderer a man belonging to another, the murdered, if found, was to be hanged as he deſerved; but if he could not be found, the

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firſt man of the ſame clan that could be found, ſhould be hanged in his ſtead. There is ſuch a ſimilarity in this to the mode of retaliation on ſects, that both muſt certainly have ſprung from the ſame ſource, the ſame original code of natural right!

But whenceſoever this principle has ariſen, it is certainly but too prevalent in moſt religious ſects. And, if we reſolve to act upon it, we do what we can to eſtabliſh perſecution every where, to the end of the world. We plead, that we perſecute papiſts, becauſe they perſecute us; and they plead that they perſecute us, becauſe we perſecute them. Our conduct will at this time be the more unjuſtifiable, becauſe not only in proteſtant countries, but even in ſome popiſh countries, the ruling powers are greatly relaxing in this reſpect. Shall we then give a check to their humanity, by teaching them, from our example, to account our brother-proteſtants a more pernicious and dangerous race than they formerly imagined them to be?

God forbid that I ſhould put on a foot of equality the diſpoſition of any in this country, with that of inquiſitors and cruſaders. I will not allow myſelf to think ſo badly even of the moſt violent. But I cannot avoid obſerving, that when once we are in this train with any adverſe ſect, it is impoſſible to ſay how far we may think ourſelves obliged to go. The ſame plea of neceſſity to render former meaſures effectual, may carry us ſuch lengths as in the beginning we ſhould have looked on with horror.

But to return: The repeal can never do hurt, becauſe it is the repeal of a ſtatute, which ſeems, even in the judgment of our antagoniſts on this queſtion, to have done no good. So far from occaſioning the decreaſe of the number of papiſts, they have been, we are told, increaſing for many years backwards. And this perhaps is the firſt inſtance in which the inefficacy of a law has been uſed as an argument againſt the repeal of it. That act, though ſevere, is not ſevere enough

enough to extirpate papiſts; at the ſame time it is much too ſevere, conſidering the ſentiments and manners of the times, for any but perſons of no character, to aſſiſt in executing it. Thus it gives papiſts all the advantage of a plauſible plea of ſuffering perſecution, without being materially hurt by actual perſecution. In ſome other countries, where Romaniſts, though not of the eſtabliſhment, have enjoyed for centuries a legal toleration, we do not hear of any clamours about their increaſe, or of any dread of danger ariſing from them. Why then ſhould not this nation, ſince we have ſo ſtrong evidence that ſeverity will not anſwer, be induced to make the experiment of what may be effected by the more humane and more chriſtian-like policy of other nations? In many inſtances, as has been obſerved by the beſt writers on juriſprudence, the unconſcionable ſeverity of laws has rendered them uſeleſs, nay made them ſerve to promote, inſtead of checking, the growth of thoſe evils againſt which they are pointed. They make thoſe very

perſons ſcreen offenders, who would otherwiſe aſſiſt in convicting them. So much in regard to the juſtice and expediency of the meaſure in general.

I ſhall now take the freedom to conſider a little, with all reſpect to my eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors, the propriety of their interfering in this buſineſs. I have no right to lay down rules: But as a brother and fellow-miniſter, I offer my opinion on a caſe in which the cauſe of religion in general, and the character of miniſters of the goſpel in particular, are concerned. I have not the remoteſt wiſh, that any regard may be paid to my judgment, further than is due to the reaſons by which it is ſupported. It was obſerved before, that the queſtion of the expediency or danger of the meaſure, in reſpect of the public, is not properly of the department of our judicatories. The only queſtion that can ſtrictly be ſaid to come under their cognizance as church courts, is that diſcuſſed in the former chapter, whether the toleration, or the perſecution of ſuch people,

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be moſt conformable to the ſpirit and laws of our holy religion. There are extraordinary caſes in which, I acknowledge, it may be pardonable, perhaps commendable, in the paſtors to ſtep aſide a little, for the ſake of doing ſome ſignal ſervice whereby the cauſe they are engaged in may be advanced, and the honour of the maſter whom they ſerve, promoted. Let us ſee whether an application from the repreſentative of this church, of the kind that was propoſed at the laſt meeting of the General Aſſembly, and will, in all probability, be again moved at the enſuing, would anſwer theſe important ends. Waving the arguments already uſed, and which to me appear unanſwerable, I ſhall only here advert to two things, firſt, to what ſuits the miniſterial character to do; and, ſecondly, to what will probably be the conſequences of the meaſure propoſed in the laſt aſſembly, if it ſhall now be adopted.

In regard to the former, it is the obſervation of an ingenious modern, that the magiſtrate

ſtrate and the paſtor, are both denominated God's miniſters, but in very different ſenſes. The magiſtrate is the miniſter of divine juſtice; the paſtor is the miniſter of divine goodneſs and grace. A moſt juſt and pertinent obſervation. The former accordingly beareth not the ſword in vain; the latter cometh announcing peace through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. The ſervice he is engaged in, is ſtyled the miniſtry of reconciliation. The former operates chiefly by fear, being the terror of evil-doers; the latter chiefly by love, in the diſplay he makes of the tender mercies of God and the love of Jeſus. There is a beauty in preſerving conſiſtency of character, and, on the contrary, there is ſomething ſingularly ſhocking to men whoſe taſte is not totally depraved, in a groſs violation of character. Sanguinary meaſures are, on certain occaſions, very ſuitable in the officer of juſtice; but it ill becomes the meſſenger of peace to breathe out, like Saul the Phariſee (unconverted indeed, but not the leſs zealous) threatenings and ſlaughter. The ſenſe of

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what became a miniſter of the New Covenant, a preacher of good will to men, was ſo ſtrong on the minds of the primitive Chriſtians, that when our religion came firſt into favour with the magiſtrate, it was looked on univerſally as a becoming action in the miniſters to uſe their good offices in behalf of an unhappy creature who had expoſed himſelf to the ſtroke of public juſtice, wherever any favourable circumſtances could be pleaded in extenuation of his crime. But in no caſe whatever was it thought ſuitable that he ſhould interpoſe to call for vengeance That the ſervant of the prince of peace ſhould prove a peacemaker, mediator, and interceſſor, was entirely conſonant to the nature of his office; but that he ſhould interpoſe as an avenger, or as an inſtigator of others to vengeance, or to violent and vindictive meaſures, was conſidered as a practical denial of the Lord that bought him, who came not to deſtroy mens lives, but to ſave them; and as what ſuited more the character of that being whom they called the adverſary and accuſer of the brethren.

If,

If, by ſome means or other, our legiſlature had been incited to think of impoſing new reſtraints, or inflicting new pains and penalties on papiſts, or on diſſenters of any denomination, it would have been excuſable, nay, on account of the motive, might have been thought praiſeworthy in the miniſters of religion, to repreſent, with all due reſpect, that they hoped, by the uſe of arms more evangelical, the end might be attained, and the public ſufficiently ſecured from danger. But the interpoſition propoſed at preſent is of a very different kind. To what ſhall I compare it? A culprit more unfortunate than criminal ſtands before his judge. The ſword is unſheathed and ready to ſtrike. Several humane perſons intercede, mention every alleviating circumſtance, propoſe taking ſecurity of the convict that he ſhall behave himſelf properly, and beg that the ſword may again be ſheathed. The magiſtrate relents, and is on the point of complying, when a perſon of a grave aſpect interpoſes, who, though he carry the olive branch, the enſign of peace,

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in his hand, with a countenance more ſtern than meek, to the ſurpriſe of every body, cries to the officer of juſtice, What are you going to do? No ſecurity can bind that wretch; and no where can the ſword of juſtice be ſheathed at this time ſo properly as in his bowels. This parable I leave to the reflection of my readers.

I ſhall add a few words on the conſequences of the application. I admit that, if made, it will poſſibly be ſucceſsful, not from any conviction of the propriety of making it, or of the fitneſs of what is aſked. But a flame, little to our credit, has been raiſed in the country; and it may be thought that yielding to the humour, however reprehenſible, and granting what is aſked, is a leſs evil, than a poſitive refuſal might prove, eſpecially conſidering the ſtate of public affairs at preſent. But the queſtion of greateſt moment is, In what light will the application repreſent the ſpirit of our people in general, and this national church in particular, to the conſtituent branches

branches of the Britiſh ſenate? It ſhould be remembered how different the fate of the like bill was in England, and even in Ireland, where that ſect, with ſome colour of reaſon, might have been accounted dangerous. But here! where comparatively they are ſo inconſiderable both in number and property,—I could ſay a great deal, but I forbear. I will not diſſemble. I am both aſhamed and grieved, that there ſhould be occaſion to ſay any thing on ſuch a ſubject.

In what light will our conduct appear, when contraſted with that of the Engliſh and Iriſh biſhops, whom it would be abſurd as well as uncharitable to accuſe of indifference in ſuch a cauſe, and who, as members of the legiſlature, readily concurred in granting the relief deſired in their countries? Is it poſſible that any of us are ſimple enough to imagine that, with judicious perſons, the compariſon will redound to our honour?

Yet

Yet amid ſo many grounds of mortification, I am happy to have it in my power to ſay, that in the laſt aſſembly, a moſt reſpectable aſſembly, and far the moſt numerous I ever witneſſed, (and I have witneſſed many) a motion for an application of this nature was thrown out as altogether improper and unbecoming, by a very great plurality of voices. It ought alſo to be attended to, that this happened when men had nothing to influence their judgment but the merits of the queſtion, not a ſingle perſon that I know of, having had the leaſt knowledge of ſuch a motion till it was made in the houſe. Tumultuous conventions and mobs and other lawleſs exceſſes had not then been artfully produced to terrify thoſe who could not be convinced. I had never before ſo diſtinct an idea of what is called in eccleſiaſtic hiſtory preaching a cruſade; at the ſame time I muſt regret that I ſhould ever have acquired additional knowledge on this ſubject, from any thing to be ſeen in this proteſtant land.

I beg it may alſo be obſerved that popery is not the only adverſary we have to ſtruggle with. I do not ſpeak of the oppoſition we are expoſed to from other ſects much more numerous. I ſpeak of the infidelity, the ſcepticiſm, the open profaneneſs, and contempt of all religion that ſo much abound in this age and country, a far more formidable foe than popery. Is it a matter of no conſequence to us, how our conduct may affect this evil, either by adding ſtrength to it, and furniſhing libertines with new arguments, for fortifying themſelves in their impiety, or by acting ſuch a part, as muſt tend to ſilence and confute them? It is well known that perſons of this ſtamp are the declared enemies of our order. Let us try to draw inſtruction from the reproaches, and even the aſperſions of our enemies. Amongſt other things, they arraign all clergymen of whatever ſect, for a pride which takes fire at the leaſt contradiction, for an ambition or luſt of power, which makes all rivalry inſupportable, and as the natural conſequence of theſe, for a perſecuting

perſecuting ſpirit, which all poſſeſs againſt the common enemy, and every ſingle ſect poſſeſſes againſt every other. The common maxim of theſe men is, 'Prieſts of all 'religions are the ſame.' That the character which they draw, is done with much exaggeration and malevolence, no impartial perſon will deny. Nor will it be denied by ſuch, on the other hand, that the unamiable ſpirit too often diſplayed by thoſe who ought to have been not only defenders, but patterns of religion, has given too great ſcope for ſuch accuſations.

It was lately propoſed in Sweden, a Lutheran, and therefore a proteſtant country, to give a toleration to all diſſenters. This meaſure would have chiefly affected Calviniſts, and next to them, if I miſtake not, Papiſts. The clergy oppoſed it. But, as the other eſtates of the kingdom approved the meaſure, it took place. Should we now, like the Swediſh clergy, interpoſe in order to fruſtrate the gracious intentions of the legiſlature, would it not contribute to

confirm the irreligious in their errors? Could we be ſurpriſed that they ſhould exclaim in triumph, 'It is preciſely as we 'thought. They are all the ſame thing at 'bottom; Papiſt, Lutheran, Calviniſt, &c. '&c. Their differences conſiſt in a few 'trifling ceremonies, or unintelligible lo-'gomachies, but the ſame ſpirit pervades 'the whole, the ſame pride, the ſame in-'tolerance, the ſame inclination to domi-'neer, and to cruſh all that oppoſe them?' I know it will be ſaid, 'What have we to 'do to mind the ſpeeches of the profane 'and graceleſs? They neither do nor will 'favour us, whatever part we act.' I imagine that even the profane and graceleſs ought not to be deſpaired of, and conſequently that their ſentiments and ſpeeches ought not to be altogether diſregarded. Such are not always irreclaimable. Much leſs ought we to furniſh them with what may ſerve not only to confirm them in their pernicious courſe, but to prove the inſtruments of gaining over others to their party. The apoſtle Peter did not think the ſenti-

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ments even of heathens were to be deſpiſed by the diſciples, and therefore enjoined them to be careful that their converſation might be honeſt among the Gentiles, that they may be aſhamed who falſely accuſe their good converſation in Chriſt *. And the apoſtle Paul makes the opinion of infidels of ſo great conſequence, that he expreſsly requires, that regard be had to it, even in the election of a biſhop. 'He muſt have 'a good report of them which are without †.' Shall we then think it a matter of no moment, that we give occaſion to the enemies of God to blaſpheme? Does it appear to us a thing abſolutely indifferent, that the good ways of the Lord are, by our means, evil ſpoken of among them who know not God, and obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Is it all one whether fools be recovered by us, or confirmed in their folly?

I conclude with my moſt fervent prayers to the God of grace and father of mercies,

* 1 Pet. ii. 12. iii. 16. † 1 Tim. iii. 7.

that he would be pleaſed to direct the great council of our church, as on every occaſion, ſo particularly on the preſent, that he would inſpire them with the amiable ſpirit of their Maſter, with the wiſdom that is from above; which is not like the wiſdom of the worldling, earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh, but firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy; that we may all know, by experience, that the fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace for them that make peace.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The proper and Chriſtian Expedients for promoting Religious Knowledge, and repreſſing Error.

IT requires but little art to make ignorance jealous. The multitude every where are ignorant, and, by conſequence, eaſily inflamed with jealouſy. It requires but few (ſometimes a ſingle perſon has been ſufficient) of thoſe in whom the populace confide, to ſuggeſt that there is danger, and they are inſtantly alarmed; they aſk neither evidence nor explanation. As the flame ſpreads, its influence on every individual increaſes. Each is actuated not only by the fervour originally excited in himſelf, but by that which is, as it were, reflected from every countenance around

him. When the fury of the people, from a notion of groſs injury, is worked up to a certain pitch, they are no longer capable of controul. They encourage one another by their number and rage. There is nothing which they do not think themſelves able to effect. They run headlong into the moſt violent exceſſes. Whatever be the cauſe they contend for, they have not ſo much as an idea of any other expedients than ſuch as are dictated by fury. It happens then almoſt invariably that they overſhoot the aim of thoſe who firſt raiſed the alarm, and awaked their jealouſy. And when they interpoſe to reſtrain them, they generally find it impracticable. For the people then have no ears for any language but that of their paſſions. In vain are they reminded that more moderate methods were pointed out to them from the beginning. If the rabble are to be ſet to work, they muſt be allowed to go to work their own way. They have neither capacity nor patience for purſuing moderate methods.

For

For theſe reaſons it would not be conſonant to juſtice to charge the effects of the popular frenzy wholly on thoſe who at firſt were active in alarming them. As little would it be, on the other hand, wholly to exculpate the firſt inſtigators. That they did not foreſee the fires that would be kindled, and the deſtruction that would enſue, and were therefore not the intentional cauſes of the particular outrages, juſtice as well as charity require us to admit; but that any one, who inflames the minds of the multitude, muſt be ſenſible, that he endangers the peace of his country, as well as the property and lives of his fellow-citizens, and therefore, by all the principles of law, is reſponſible for the conſequences, cannot be denied. And even on the principles of ſound morality, he is ſo far anſwerable, as the conſequences actually were, or might have been, foreſeen by him. Nor is it eaſy in this caſe to find an apology for the heart, that is not at the expence of the underſtanding.

him. When the fury of the people, from a notion of groſs injury, is worked up to a certain pitch, they are no longer capable of controul. They encourage one another by their number and rage. There is nothing which they do not think themſelves able to effect. They run headlong into the moſt violent exceſſes. Whatever be the cauſe they contend for, they have not ſo much as an idea of any other expedients than ſuch as are dictated by fury. It happens then almoſt invariably that they overſhoot the aim of thoſe who firſt raiſed the alarm, and awaked their jealouſy. And when they interpoſe to reſtrain them, they generally find it impracticable. For the people then have no ears for any language but that of their paſſions. In vain are they reminded that more moderate methods were pointed out to them from the beginning. If the rabble are to be ſet to work, they muſt be allowed to go to work their own way. They have neither capacity nor patience for purſuing moderate methods.

For

For theſe reaſons it would not be conſonant to juſtice to charge the effects of the popular frenzy wholly on thoſe who at firſt were active in alarming them. As little would it be, on the other hand, wholly to exculpate the firſt inſtigators. That they did not foreſee the fires that would be kindled, and the deſtruction that would enſue, and were therefore not the intentional cauſes of the particular outrages, juſtice as well as charity require us to admit; but that any one, who inflames the minds of the multitude, muſt be ſenſible, that he endangers the peace of his country, as well as the property and lives of his fellow-citizens, and therefore, by all the principles of law, is reſponſible for the conſequences, cannot be denied. And even on the principles of ſound morality, he is ſo far anſwerable, as the conſequences actually were, or might have been, foreſeen by him. Nor is it eaſy in this caſe to find an apology for the heart, that is not at the expence of the underſtanding.

But we can ſay the leſs in behalf of thoſe from whom the evil originated, becauſe their more moderate methods are as really unjuſtifiable, on the maxims of the goſpel, as the more violent methods of the multitude. The difference between them is not ſo much in kind as in degree. The introduction of force into the ſervice of religion, whether applied by the magiſtrate, or by the mob, has ever proved, and will prove the bane of true religion. It is the eſtabliſhment of the profeſſion of religion on the ruins of its ſpirit. It is attempting to ſupport chriſtianity by undermining virtue. It preſents the ſtrongeſt temptations to what every one who reflects, whatever be his ſyſtem of opinions, muſt admit to be the groſſeſt crimes. It is one of the earlieſt corruptions of Antichriſtian Rome, the ſpiritual Babylon, and the ſource of moſt of her other abominations. I may add, it is a ſure evidence, that we have not yet recovered from the intoxication occaſioned by the envenomed cup of which ſhe has made all nations drink, when we ſo entirely

ly adopt her ſentiments, and ſpeak her language. Ill does it befit in particular the ſhepherds of Chriſt's flock to recur to ſuch unſanctified expedients. 'To what expe-'dients ſhall we then recur, when an im-'mediate danger threatens?' To ſuch only as are (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) congenial to the ſervice.

But let it be obſerved, that there is not always danger when the cry is raiſed. There is no more real danger here at preſent to proteſtantiſm from popery, than there was in England to epiſcopacy in Queen Anne's time, from proteſtant diſſenters, when the like cry of the danger of the church, from a cauſe as trivial, excited ſuch tumults throughout that nation, or than there was to chriſtianity itſelf not thirty years ago from judaiſm, on occaſion of the naturalization bill, or Jew bill, which put all England in a ferment. The mode of arguing adopted at that time in England, in regard to Jews, was remarkably ſimilar to that now uſed in this country, in regard

to

to papiſts. If Jews, it was ſaid, were allowed but liberty, they would ſoon become poſſeſſed of power. If they were, in any caſe, permitted to acquire real, (or what we commonly call *heritable*) property, they would ſoon be proprietors of the whole kingdom; if entire freedom were given to their religious profeſſion, judaiſm would ſoon become predominant; circumciſion in leſs than a century would be eſtabliſhed by act of parliament, and our churches would all be converted into ſynagogues. Then would commence the perſecution of Chriſtians. And for this purpoſe croſſes, not crucifixes, would be erected in every market town.

By I know not what infatuation, it happens almoſt every where, that the bulk of the people ſeem diſpoſed to think, that if any ſect, how inſignificant ſoever, were to enjoy the ſame freedom in its religious profeſſion with thoſe of the eſtabliſhment, though without any ſhare of power, it would quickly be preferred by every body,

and

and the eſtabliſhed worſhip would be totally deſerted. One would think that at bottom there lurked ſome apprehenſion, that the eſtabliſhed model is of all religious profeſſions the moſt unpopular in the country, or would ſoon become ſo, if any competitor were admitted; that conſequently they imputed the preference given it by the people, ſolely to their ignorance, and were inclined to ſuſpect, that, on a fair examination, it would prove the moſt irrational and the moſt unſcriptural. They act as though they thought, that without its legal prerogatives, particularly without the ſignal advantage of penal ſtatutes, ſuppreſſing, or, at leaſt, checking other ſects, it would not have ſo much as an exiſtence. Now what is moſt extraordinary is, that the people who ſeem to be actuated by ſuch unaccountable ſuſpicions are not thoſe who think moſt unfavourably of the eſtabliſhment; on the contrary, they are commonly the greateſt ſticklers for its abſolute perfection in every article. I do not accuſe one national church, or one ſect in particular,

particular, of this abſurdity. It is pretty common to all: In this reſpect popery, prelacy, preſbytery, are the ſame.

Now of all religious parties, the papiſts, to do them juſtice, are the moſt excuſable in entertaining theſe ſuſpicions. The reaſon is evident. No party can worſe bear being brought to an open trial. Error, like vice, ſhuns the light. Virtue and truth, ought, on the contrary, to ſeek it. To the latter it is as beneficial, as it is fatal to the former. It was in the night, while men ſlept, in the decline of all uſeful knowledge, and the rapid advance of ignorance and barbarity, that the tares of popery were ſown by the enemy among the wheat of the goſpel, that good ſeed which had been ſown by the Son of Man. What was nouriſhed by ignorance, and could have been nouriſhed by it only, muſt be hurt by knowledge. No wonder then that popery ſhould dread inquiry, ſhould admit no competition, ſhould not give ſo much as a hearing to an adverſary wherever ſhe can

avoid

avoid it. Reaſon is againſt her, Scripture is againſt her, nay antiquity (which with thoſe unverſed in hiſtory, never with the knowing, ſhe is fond to plead) is againſt her. What has ſhe then to truſt to, but the tyrant's iron rod? But for proteſtants to ſhow the like illiberal ſuſpiciouſneſs is to betray their own cauſe, and ſin againſt the majeſty of truth. Truth requires but the light; becauſe, in regard to her, to be known is to be loved; error ſcreens herſelf in darkneſs, being conſcious, that, in regard to her, to be ſeen is to be hated. It is the common ſign of a bad cauſe to be ſuſpicious of itſelf, and to avoid a fair inquiry. This is one of the many evil ſymptoms which ſtrongly mark the cauſe of Rome.

But, in order to a fair inquiry, ſome things are previouſly neceſſary. Such are the means of knowledge, and the means of ſupport to thoſe employed in conveying knowledge. In theſe days we have no ground to look for miraculous aſſiſtance. The church, now arrived at maturity, is

largely

largely ſupplied with all neceſſary evidence within herſelf, and no longer needs thoſe props and ſupports ſhe was obliged to lean upon in her infant years. But the effects produced by thoſe miracles ſtill remain with us as evidences of the reality of the account, and the fulfilment of prophecies in regard to the progreſs, the moſt memorable events, the eſtabliſhment and the defection of the church, which in the early days they could not have, amply ſupply to us the want of preſent miracles. If we uſe properly the ſpiritual weapons ſuited to this ſpiritual warfare, we ſhall have no reaſon to deſpair of ſucceſs. That human means ought to be employed none but the mereſt enthuſiaſts will deny. Only let them be ſuch human means as ſuit the cauſe of truth and charity.

If popery, as has been contended, has been, in ſome places, on the encreaſe, it will be found, on inquiry, that it has been only where the people unhappily are far removed from the means of knowledge.

The

The evil itſelf, which is ignorance, points out the cure. Introduce the light, and the darkneſs is diſpelled. In large and extenſive pariſhes in the Highlands, they often recur to popiſh teachers, becauſe they have no other. Where there is groſs ignorance, there are alſo no doubt barbarity and ſuperſtition. And wherever theſe are, the abſurdities of popery are better ſuited to the taſte of the people, than the doctrines of a more rational religion. Now that in pariſhes in the highlands and weſtern iſles, ſome of ſixteen, ſome of twenty-five, ſome of thirty miles in length, and from five to ſeven in breadth, ſome containing near three thouſand inhabitants, where they have but one proteſtant paſtor, how can they eſcape being perverted to popery? This muſt appear a neceſſary conſequence, when we conſider the uncommon zeal which papiſts have always ſhown for making proſelytes.

Now for redreſſing this grievance what is to be done? I know only two methods, compulſion

compulſion and perſuaſion. If we recur to the firſt, and after it, though by no means a chriſtian method, the general hankering ſeems to be, what will our penal laws ſignify in thoſe iſlands and tracts of land where the papiſts in number compared with the proteſtants, are already by the accounts that have been given *, as thirty to one in ſome places, in others as twenty, in others as ten? Or what end would it anſwer, though we ſhould get laws ten times more ſevere than thoſe in force at preſent? Can we imagine, that any perſon, however well inclined to the work, would be ſo mad as to attempt, in thoſe diſtricts, to execute the laws? Sanguinary ſtatutes, in ſuch caſes, do but ſhow the impotence of the legiſlative power, and embolden people the more openly to ſet it at defiance. They will have this additional motive in a cauſe like this, that the more daring their tranſgreſſion of our laws is, the greater will be their merit with their party, becauſe

* See the account publiſhed by the ſociety for propagating chriſtian knowledge in 1774.

becauſe done for the intereſt of the church. Can any perſon, who reflects, be ſo infatuated as to think that in this way any ſervice will be done to proteſtantiſm? That ſuch fruitleſs attempts will do it great diſſervice, one muſt be totally blinded by his prejudices not to perceive. The minds of the people will more than ever be alienated from us; their numbers will ſtrengthen their reſolution; and their ſucceſs will enſure their perſeverance. To me it is manifeſt that in ſuch pariſhes at leaſt, the repeal propoſed will be favourable to the other, and the only chriſtian method of perſuaſion, becauſe it will be of great uſe to us for gaining their confidence, and bringing them without ſuſpicion to join with us in other ordinary affairs. If we will not admit perſons who offer themſelves as friends and fellow citizens, and accept ſuch ſervice from them for the defence of the ſtate, as they think they can in a conſiſtency with their duty give us, we in a manner force them to combine with one another, for their own defence, againſt

us. We gain to ourſelves, beſides all the odium of being perſecutors, without gaining any thing to the cauſe. They will have all the advantage of the plea of being perſecuted for conſcience ſake, without ſuſtaining any loſs by perſecution. We arm their minds with prejudices againſt us, and deprive ourſelves of the power of ever gaining on them by ſofter methods. In brief, if nothing will pleaſe but the antichriſtian plan of converting by the ſword, and if we are now ſo unaccuſtomed to evangelical weapons that we ſhould be utterly at a loſs how to uſe them, we have no chance at all, on that plan, if we ſet about the work in a faint-hearted manner, and adopt the meaſures of Antichriſt by halves. We ſhall but expoſe ourſelves, and be found in the end to have done more ill than good.

'Well, if we are not to go faintly to 'work,' it may be aſked, 'what is the ſtout-'hearted method you would propoſe?' I anſwer, What would the papiſts, our admired

mired maſters, in this motely ſpiritual temporal warfare, have done in the like caſe? For though in words we loudly condemn their conduct, we are ever recurring to their example for a pattern, and to ſerve as a juſtification of ourſelves. I ſhould rather aſk, What did they when heretics were ſo numerous that penal laws could have no effect? Their aim was then to ſubdue them by the ſword. They inſtituted a cruſade, and made war upon them as the enemies of Chriſt. This was their method with the Albigenſes. Soldiers were inliſted in Chriſt's name; for thoſe pretended ſervants would fight for him, in ſpite of himſelf. An army was accordingly ſent to convince the heretics of their errors, after the military faction, and convert them at the point of the ſword. Thoſe who were ſo obſtinately unreaſonable as not to be convinced by ſuch weighty arguments, were butchered without mercy. Chriſt's kingdom had, in their hands, totally changed its character. By his account, it was not proper for his ſervants to fight,

unleſs his kingdom were, what it was not, a worldly kingdom. By their account, nothing was ſo proper. But the myſtery is unravelled when we reflect that the kingdom they fought for was in fact a worldly kingdom, miſnamed Chriſt's. Now if we are capable of adopting the like meaſures, and in order to grace the annals of Scotland for the eighteenth century, were to inſtitute a proteſtant cruſade, we are, I am afraid, but ill furniſhed (admitting we obtain all the aſſiſtance we can expect from the ſecular arm) with the means of executing ſuch a plan. The pope is much better provided in reſources for an undertaking of this ſort. His ſoldiers, beſide all temporal advantages, receive out of the church's inexhauſtible treaſury plenty of pardons and indulgences, and a ſure paſſport to heaven, in caſe they ſhould die in the cauſe. We have abandoned all pretenſions to ſuch trumpery, and, however convenient it might be for us, I queſtion whether it would be in our power now to reſume it.

There

There is no exaggeration, or hyperbole, in what I ſay; I inſiſt on it ſeriouſly, that if the popiſh and not the chriſtian mode of converſion is to be adopted, there is not a ſtep on this ſide the utter extirpation of thoſe that will not yield, at which we can ſtop, without doing the cauſe of proteſtantiſm more injury than ſervice. Now it is only in thoſe highland pariſhes that I find any complaints of the increaſe of popery. The ſmalleſt degree of attention to the above mentioned accounts, publiſhed by the ſociety, makes it evident that it has been occaſioned neither by the want of penal laws, nor by a failure in the execution, for in both reſpects they were on the ſame footing with other parts of the country, but by the want of inſtruction. The places that we deſerted, they occupied. Can we wonder at this? Would we have the people be atheiſts? If we will give them no religion, can we blame them for accepting one from thoſe that are willing to give it? In the lowlands which are far more popu-

lous, where the pariſhes are much leſs extenſive, and generally well ſupplied both in miniſters and in ſchoolmaſters, we find no reaſon for ſuch complaints. In regard to people of rank, we have been rather gaining ground than loſing it. The only places where there is immediate occaſion for a check are the highlands and weſtern iſles; and in theſe it is plain that any coercive methods which have yet been thought of, would prove totally ineffectual. It would be impoſſible in that way to anſwer any valuable purpoſe, unleſs we were to proceed to ſuch extremities, as I hope (notwithſtanding the ugly appearances of late in ſome of our principal cities) we have not retained ſo much of the ſpirit of popery as to be able to think of.

If it is in vain then to recur to the weapons of Babylon, let us be induced to betake ourſelves to the armoury of Chriſt. Had we but half the zeal that we may be chriſtians ourſelves, which we have that others

may

may not be papiſts, there would be no occaſion for arguments on this head. Nothing can be more manifeſt than that the great cauſe of the evil complained of, is the want of proteſtant teachers, both paſtors and ſchoolmaſters. And the principal cauſes of this deficiency are, the immoderate extent of pariſhes, and the want of livings. If a proper method could be deviſed for ſupplying this defect; if new erections were made from time to time where moſt needed, and the new erected pariſhes ſuitably ſupplied, there would be great ground to hope that, in proceſs of time, a conſiderable change, in reſpect of chriſtian knowledge, might be effected. We ſhall be convinced of this truth, if we but reflect, that, in the highlands, popery and ignorance are always found to go together. And even where the meaſures propoſed may have little effect at firſt, in ſurmounting prejudices, and producing converſions, it will not be without its uſe, in preventing further ſeductions.

But the great difficulty lies here, How are the teachers to be ſupported? Where are our funds? Great zeal has appeared of late for the proteſtant intereſt. In order to oppoſe any parliamentary relief to papiſts, money, I am told, has been contributed, and ſubſcriptions given to a conſiderable amount. Some noted boroughs and corporations have even gone ſo far as to engage lawyers for oppoſing it in parliament. I ſhould be happy to have it in my power to convince theſe people, of what is a moſt certain, and, in my judgment, a moſt evident truth, that the money thus contributed will be of real ſervice to the cauſe which they wiſh to promote, if given for raiſing a fund for ſupplying the highlands properly with teachers, of which there is ſtill ſuch manifeſt need. I appeal to thoſe zealous perſons themſelves, if they can but reflect coolly on any thing, whether this be not, beyond all compariſon, a more feaſible way (and let me add, a more creditable way) of ſerving the cauſe of proteſtantiſm, than to throw money away

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on lawyers, in order to prevent the repeal of a law which, by their own confeſſion, has not been of the ſmalleſt utility, for checking the evil complained of.

But it may be ſaid, that though ſuch an application of the money were agreed to by the contributors and ſubſcribers, it would go but a ſhort way, perhaps not farther than the endowment of a ſingle pariſh, if even ſo far. This however would be ſomething. But what I have yet mentioned is not the whole. There are many in the country, not only private perſons but communities, who highly diſapprove the propoſed oppoſition to the repeal, who think it would be not only diſhonourable, and unbefitting the cauſe of chriſtianity, but even prejudicial, though attended with ſucceſs, who nevertheleſs would gladly embrace an opportunity of contributing to advance the cauſe by chriſtian methods, and of demonſtrating to the world, that they are not (as they have been miſrepreſented by

by perſons whoſe zeal far outſtrips their judgment) people who care for none of theſe things. Let but an attempt of this kind be ſet on foot, and more perhaps will be given than is at preſent imagined.

It will be ſaid, 'Was there not a collection made by order of Aſſembly, a few years ago, for the purpoſe now mentioned, which amounted to a very ſmall matter? We have not great encouragement, then, to expect much in this way.' To this I reply, 1ſt, The generality of mankind are apt to be remiſs and inattentive to things of this nature, till ſome remarkable event happen to rouſe them. The alarms lately raiſed have ſupplied us with ſuch an event. 2dly, The example of the liberality of thoſe communities and individuals who had intended the ſame good end (though by means we think neither judicious nor juſtifiable) might, it would be hoped, excite emulation in others who would chooſe to ſhow that they are not inferior in their ardour for the proteſtant cauſe, when its advancement

vancement is not purſued by Romiſh expedients. 3dly, It may not be improper, if it ſhall ſeem meet to the wiſdom of our eccleſiaſtical ſuperiors in the enſuing aſſembly, to recommend to ſynods or preſbyteries to chooſe fit perſons, both miniſters and elders, for receiving ſubſcriptions from perſons of rank and others within their reſpective juriſdictions, beſide appointing a collection to be made in the pariſh churches from the common people, and to recommend alſo to the Royal Boroughs, which are all repreſented in the Aſſembly, to obtain the aid of their reſpective corporations for a ſervice that in every view ſhould be admitted by proteſtants to be pious, charitable, and chriſtian, in reſpect both of the end and of the means. Were a plan of this kind to be adopted, I ſhould not doubt of our getting liberal aſſiſtance from many wealthy perſons in England, from Scotchmen abroad, and even others well affected both to the proteſtant religion, and to the cauſe of liberty. The money collected ought doubtleſs to be intruſted to the management of the

Society

Society in Scotland for propagating Chriſtian Knowledge, whoſe known integrity and zeal, as well as their acquaintance with the ſtate of the Highlands and weſtern iſles, render them of all perſons the fitteſt for ſuch a truſt. I had the firſt ſuggeſtion of a ſcheme of this kind from a gentleman of this place, who thinks as I do, in regard to our late alarms; but who, if a method becoming chriſtians and proteſtants be agreed to, I have reaſons to believe, will, as well as many others, contribute liberally. If meaſures of this kind ſhould be adopted, I think it would not be a difficult matter to evince that the propoſed repeal, inſtead of doing hurt, would be of ſervice, in more ways than one. But to conclude,

Is there not at leaſt ſome probability, that if this, or ſomething of the kind, were done, a reformation in the highlands might in part be affected? But what do they themſelves, that eſpouſe meaſures of coercion, ſay, is to be expected in their way? I ſhall ſuppoſe they ſucceed. The act of King William,

about

about which the diſpute aroſe, remains as it was. And what will the cauſe of proteſtantiſm gain thereby in the highlands? Or what will the cauſe of popery loſe? It would be eaſier to point out, on the other hand, what will be the probable loſs of proteſtantiſm, and gain of popery. The meaſures purſued will prove a good handle for working up what at preſent is no more than a paſſive compliance with popery, as being the only religion that is rendered acceſſible to them, into an active zeal for the cauſe, and an implacable hatred of thoſe whom they will be made to conſider as not only their enemies, but the enemies of God. And what effect the appearance of perſecution may have, in places abounding with papiſts, on weak and ill inſtructed proteſtants, I will not ſay. For my part, I acknowledge that my diſlike to popery is ſo great, that I would never do it ſo much honour as to give it either martyrs or confeſſors to boaſt of. The method I propoſe has a direct tendency to remove the evil, without exaſperating mens minds; and far from bringing a diſgrace

diſgrace upon our church and nation, it will redound greatly to our honour.

Indeed, I can conceive but one objection againſt it, which is, I own, as times are, a great one, namely, that it is a chriſtian method. For, to ſay the truth, chriſtian methods of converſion, are become ſo obſolete in Chriſtendom, that it looks rather romantic to propoſe them. This makes me fear much leaſt that objection alone prove ſufficient to defeat the project. We are very zealous without doubt, and ſo are the papiſts. And what does their zeal moſtly, and ours too, amount to? Juſt to this, that we can be perſuaded to do any thing for God's ſake, except to love God and our neighbour. Of all taſks this is the hardeſt. For the ſake of God men will diveſt themſelves of humanity; and to advance their church, will ſacrifice every remain of virtue, will even turn aſſaſſins and incendiaries. But how few in compariſon can be perſuaded, for God's ſake, to make a ſacrifice of their pride, of their revenge, of their malice, and

other

other unruly paſſions? Who can be induced to be humble, to be meek, to be humane, to be charitable, to be forgiving, and to adopt their maſter's rule of doing to others as they would that others ſhould do to them.

Permit me, then, my dear countrymen, fellow-chriſtians, and fellow-proteſtants, to beſeech you by the meekneſs and gentleneſs of Chriſt, that ye would maturely weigh this moſt momentous buſineſs, and not ſuffer your minds by any means to be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt. Remember, Oh remember, that if ye would ſerve God indeed, ye muſt ſerve him in his own way. We ſhow an abſolute diſtruſt in him, and a want of faith in the principles for which we pretend to be zealous, when we cannot reſtrain ourſelves to thoſe means only for the advancement of his cauſe, which are warranted by his word. God grant you underſtanding in all things.

FINIS.